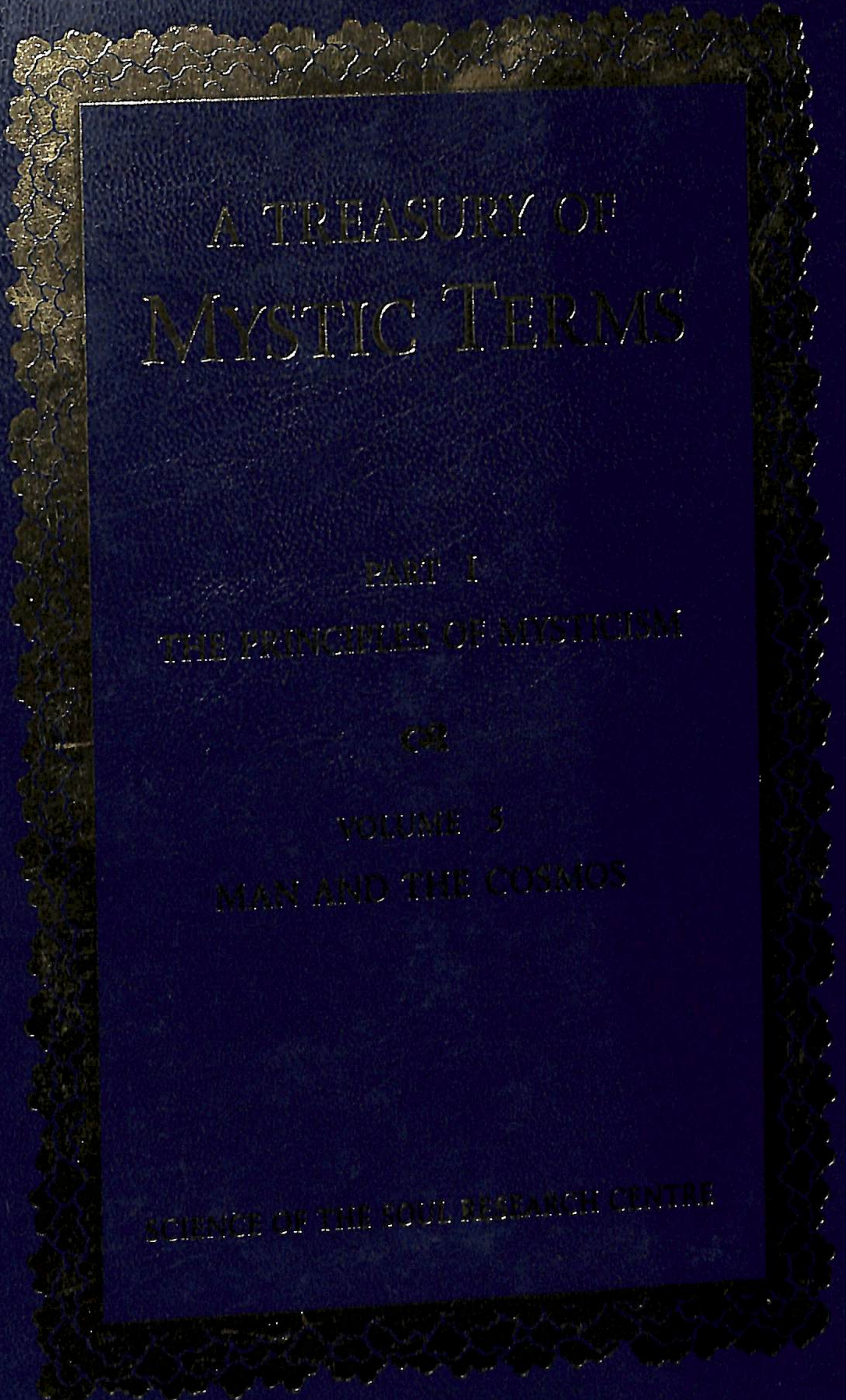

A TREASURY OF
MYSTIC TERMS

PART I

THE PRINCIPLES OF MYSTICISM

◆

VOLUME 5

MAN AND THE COSMOS

SCIENCE OF THE SOUL RESEARCH CENTRE

A TREASURY OF
MYSTIC TERMS

PART I
THE PRINCIPLES OF MYSTICISM

❧

VOLUME 5
MAN AND THE COSMOS

JOHN DAVIDSON

SCIENCE OF THE SOUL RESEARCH CENTRE

Published by:
G.P.S. Bhalla, Secretary
Science of the Soul Research Centre
Radha Soami Satsang Beas
Guru Ravi Dass Marg, Pusa Road,
New Delhi 110005, India

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First Edition 2003

10 09 08 07 06 05 04 03 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 III II I

ISBN 81-901731-0-3

Printed in India

EDITED AND LARGELY WRITTEN BY

JOHN DAVIDSON

WITH THE HELP OF AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM

A Treasury of Mystic Terms has been compiled using the collective skills of an international team of researchers, contributors, assistant editors and readers with a wide variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. All members of the team are spiritual seekers, most of whom have found inspiration and encouragement in the teachings of the mystics of Beas in India. All those involved have given freely to this project, both as a source of inspiration for themselves, and as a way of showing to others the essential unity behind all the apparent variety in religion, philosophy and mysticism.

Everybody has a perspective or a bias – coloured glasses through which they view the world. So although every attempt has been made to handle each entry within its own religious or mystical context, if any particular perspective is detected, it will inevitably be that of the contributors and their perception of mysticism. This does not mean, of course, that the contributors have always been in agreement. The preparation of the *Treasury* has often resulted in healthy debate!

SEE VOLUME 1 FOR THE LIST OF RESEARCHERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BUDDHIST *DHAMMAPADA* are founded mostly upon the work of S. Radhakrishnan and Narada Thera.

Many scholarly translations of Zarathushtra's *Gāthās* into European languages have been made from defective Pahlavi translations. The translations here are from the Avestan, and are based largely on the original work of Dr I.R.S. Taraporewala.

Quotations from the *Ādi Granth* are from the English translation of Manmohan Singh.

Most of the translations of the *Bhagavad Gītā* have drawn upon the earlier translation of Swāmī Tapasyānanda.

The sayings of Heraclitus are found only as fragments, quoted in the works of other writers of antiquity. Various scholarly numbering systems exist for these fragments, the system employed here being that used by Philip Wheelwright in *Heraclitus* (Princeton, 1959).

Most of the translations of Rūmī's *Maśnavī* are based upon the work of R.A. Nicholson.

The indigenous Guaraní of eastern Paraguay, made up of three large subgroups – the Mbyá, the Paí Cayuá and the Avá-Chiripá – are described in books and articles by the most notable experts in this field, Miguel Alberto Bartolomé, León Cádogan, Alfred Métraux and Egon Schaden. Most of the information used for the Guaraní mystical terms derives from these scholars' studies of the Mybá and Avá-Chiripá. If a term is general to all indigenous Guaraní, it is labelled (G); if a term is known only to apply to the Avá-Chiripá subgroup, it is labelled (AC).

The transliteration conventions used for all Avá-Chiripá terms are the same as those used in Miguel Alberto Bartolomé's article, *Shamanism and Religion Among the Avá-Chiripá,* which resulted from his field studies in the northeastern region of Paraguay in 1968 and 1969. Bartolomé explains that since Paraguayan Guaraní has an officially recognized written form, he does not use phonetic symbols except the letter 'y' for the sixth guttural vowel.

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The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex, tr. Violet MacDermot, 1978; *The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans,* tr. E.S. Drower, 1959; *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* vol. 1 (A – B), ed. H.A.R. Gibb, J.H. Kramers, E. Lévi-Provençal, J. Schacht, B. Lewis, Ch. Pellat, 1960; *The Kephalaia of the Teacher: The Edited Coptic Manichaean Texts in Translation with Commentry,* Iain Gardner (*Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies* XXXVII, 1995); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XI: *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2–5 and VI,* ed. Douglas M. Parrott, 1979 (*Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles,* tr. Douglas M. Parrott and R. McL. Wilson; *Apocalypse of Adam,* tr. George W. MacRae, ed. Douglas M. Parrott; *Apocalypse of Paul,* tr. George W. MacRae and William R. Murdock, ed. Douglas M. Parrott; *Asclepius,* tr. James Brashler, Peter A. Dirkse and Douglas M. Parrott; *Authoritative Teaching,* tr. George W. MacRae, ed. Douglas M. Parrott; *Concept of Our Great Power,* tr. Frederik Wisse, ed. Douglas M. Parrott; *Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth,* tr. James Brashler, Peter A. Dirkse and Douglas M. Parrott; *First Apocalypse of James,* tr. William R. Schoedel, ed. Douglas M. Parrott; *Second Apocalypse of James,* tr. Charles W. Hedrick, ed. Douglas M. Parrott; *Thunder: Perfect Mind,* tr. George W. MacRae, ed. Douglas M. Parrott); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXII: *Nag Hammadi Codex I (the Jung Codex),* vol. 1, ed. Harold W. Attridge, 1985 (*Gospel of Truth,* tr. Harold W. Attridge and George W. MacRae; *Prayer of the Apostle Paul,* tr.

Dieter Mueller; *Treatise on the Resurrection*, tr. Malcolm L. Peel; *Tripartite Tractate*, tr. Harold W. Attridge and Dieter Mueller); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXVIII: *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick, 1990 (*Allogenes*, tr. John D. Turner and Orval S. Wintermute; *Sentences of Sextus*, tr. Frederik Wisse; *Trimorphic Protennoia*, tr. John D. Turner); *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXX: *Nag Hammadi Codex VII, XIII*, ed. Birger A. Pearson, 1996 (*Paraphrase of Shem*, tr. Frederik Wisse; *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, tr. Roger A. Bullard and Joseph A. Gibbons; *Teachings of Silvanus*, tr. Malcolm L. Peel and Jan Zandee; *Three Steles of Seth*, tr. James M. Robinson); *A Pair of Naṣoraean Commentaries (Two Priestly Documents): The Great "First World" and the Lesser "First World"*, tr. E.S. Drower, 1963; reprinted by permission of E.J. Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden, The Netherlands.

"Lower (Second?) Section of the Manichaean Hymns", tr. Tsui Chi, in *BSOAS* 11 (1943–46); *Selected Poems from the Dīvāni Shamsi Tabrīz*, ed. & tr. R.A. Nicholson, 1952; reproduced by permission of Cambridge University Press.

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Sources of Chinese Tradition, vol. 1, comp. T. de Bary, Wing-tsih Chan and Burton Watson, *et al.*, 1960; *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings*, tr. Burton Watson, 1968; reprinted by permission of Columbia University Press.

Complete Works of St John of the Cross, 3 vols.-in-one, tr. & ed. E. Allison Peers, 1964 [1935]; reprinted by permission of Continuum International Publishing Ltd.

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Kashf al-Mahjūb: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufiism, 'Alī b. 'Uthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, ed. & tr. R.A. Nicholson, 1970 [1911, 1936]; *The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*, 8 vols., ed. & tr. with notes & commentary by R.A. Nicholson, 1925–1940; reprinted by permission of the Trustees of the E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust.

Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia, tr. Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, 1993, copyright © 1995 by Hans-J. Klimkeit; reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers Inc.

The Koran Interpreted, 2 vols., tr. A.J. Arberry, 1964 [1955]; reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

The Apostolic Fathers, vols. I-II, Loeb Classical Library vols. 24 & 25, tr. Kirsopp Lake, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press,

1912, 1917; *Philo,* vols. I-II, IV-V, Loeb Classical Library vols. 226, 227, 261 & 275, tr. F.H. Colson & G.H. Whitaker, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1929, 1932, 1934; *Aristotle,* vol. III, Loeb Classical Library vol. 400, tr. E.M. Forster and D.J. Furley, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1955; reprinted by permission of the publishers and the Trustees of the Loeb Classical Library. The Loeb Classical Library® is a registered trademark of the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

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The Book of Lieh-Tzu, tr. A.C. Graham, 1991 [1960]; reprinted by permission of John Murray (Publishers) Ltd.

The Prayer Book: Weekday, Sabbath and Festival, including *Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers),* tr. Ben Zion Bokser, 1957; reprinted by permission of Mrs. Kallia Bokser.

Sufi Symbolism: The Nurbakhsh Encyclopedia of Sufi Terminology, 15 vols., Javad Nurbakhsh, tr. Terry Graham *et al.,* 1984–2001; reprinted by permission of Khaniqahi-Nimatullahi Publications.

A Manichaean Psalm-Book, Part II, ed. & tr. C.R.C. Allbery, 1938; reprinted by permission of Kohlhammer GmbH.

The Jerusalem Bible, English text rev. & ed. Harold Fisch, 1992; reprinted by permission of Koren Publishers Jerusalem Ltd.

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The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts, 3 vols., arranged by Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby, with extensive introductions & explanations by Isaiah Tishby, tr. David Goldstein, 1989, 1991; reprinted by permission of the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.

The Padma Purāṇa, 10 vols., tr. Dr N.A. Deshpande, 1988–91; *The Vedic Experience,* Raimundo Panikkar, 1997; reprinted by permission of Motilal Banarsidass.

"Shamanism Among the Avá-Chiripá", Miguel A. Bartolomé, in *Spirits, Shamans, and Stars: Perspectives from South America,* ed. David L. Browman and Ronald A. Schwarz, 1979; reprinted by permission of Mouton de Gruyter.

Gheranda Samhita, tr. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu, 1999 [1914–15]; *The Siva Samhita,* tr. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu, 1999 [1914–15]; reprinted by permission of Munshiram Manoharlal.

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[1924]; *The Apocryphal Old Testament,* ed. H.E.D. Sparks, 1984; reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

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Heraclitus, P. Wheelwright, copyright © 1959 by Princeton University Press; reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.

The Upanishads, 4 vols., tr. & commentary Swami Nikhilananda, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, 1990, 1994, copyright © 1949, 1952, 1956, 1959 by Swami Nikhilananda; *Self-Knowledge (Atmabodha),* tr. & commentary Swami Nikhilananda, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, 1989, copyright © 1946 by Swami Nikhilananda; reprinted by permission of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York.

Occult Science: An Outline, Rudolf Steiner, tr. George & Mary Adams, 1969; reproduced by permission of Rudolf Steiner Press.

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Thanks are also due to Dr John Smith, Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge University, for making specialist character fonts available to us.

ABBREVIATIONS

General

cf.	*confero* (L. I compare), compare
e.g.	*exempli gratia* (L. for the sake of example), for example
ff.	following (pages, lines, etc.)
i.e.	*id est* (L. that is), that is (to say), in other words
lit.	literally
p.	page
pp.	pages
viz.	*videlicet,* from the Latin *videre* (to see) + *licet* (it is permissible), used to specify items
▸2	See *A Treasury of Mystic Terms,* Part II

Dates

b.	born
c.	*circa,* about
d.	died
fl.	flourished

AH	*Anno Hegirae,* the Islamic dating system, from 622 CE, the Hegira *(al-Hijrah),* the year of Muḥammad's flight to Madīnah
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era

Languages

A	Arabic
AC	Avá-Chiripá
Am	Aramaic
Av	Avestan
C	Chinese
G	Guaraní
Gk	Greek
H	Hindi
He	Hebrew
J	Japanese

L	Latin
M	Marathi
Md	Mandaean
P	Persian
Pa	Pali
Pu	Punjabi
Pv	Pahlavi
S	Sanskrit
Su	Sumerian
T	Tibetan
U	Urdu

Sources Cited

See *Bibliography* for full details of published works. Published collections of the writings of Indian Saints have been referred to in source references as below. Other collections published as the *Bānī, Granthāvalī, Padāvalī* or *Shabdāvalī* of various Indian Saints have been similarly abbreviated.

Charaṇdās Jī kī Bānī	*Bānī*
Dhanī Dharamdās Jī kī Shabdāvalī	*Shabdāvalī*
Kabīr Granthāvalī	*Granthāvalī*
Kabīr Sāhib kā Bījak	*Bījak*
Kabīr Sākhī Sangrah	*Sākhī Sangrah*
Mīrā Sudhā Sindhu	*Sudhā Sindhu*
Tulsīdās kī Bārahmāsī	*Bārahmāsī*
Tulsī Sāhib Hāthrasvale kī Shabdāvalī	*Shabdāvalī*

Other texts cited are abbreviated as follows:

AAA	*Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 2 (translation), ed. & tr. W.R. Wright.
AF1–2	*The Apostolic Fathers,* 2 vols., tr. Kirsopp Lake. See *Acknowledgements.*
AMAS	*al-Mu'jam al-Ṣūfī,* Khānam Dr Sa'ād al-Ḥakīm.
AMBF	*Aḥādīś-i Maśnavī,* B. Furūzānfar.
ANT	*The Apocryphal New Testament,* tr. M.R. James. See *Acknowledgements.*
AOT	*The Apocryphal Old Testament,* ed. H.E.D. Sparks. See *Acknowledgements.*
APP	"Apokalypse des Pseudo-Propheten und Pseudo-Messias Abraham Abulafia", A. Jellinek.
ASN	"Annihilation and Subsistance", Javad Nurbakhsh.

AW	*The Ancient Wisdom: An Outline of Theosophical Teaching,* Annie Besant.
AYA	*The Holy Qur'ān,* tr. & commentary 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī.
BC	*The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex,* tr. Violet MacDermot. See *Acknowledgements.*
BEB	*Burzoes Einleitung zu dem Buch Kalila wa Dimna,* Nöldeke.
BES	*Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux,* as told through John G. Neihardt. See *Acknowledgements.*
BGT	*Bhagavad Gītā,* tr. Swāmī Tapasyānanda.
BLBR	*The Book of Legends (Sefer ha-Aggadah): Legends from the Talmud and Midrash,* ed. Hayim Nahmun Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky, tr. W.G. Braude. See *Acknowledgements.*
BLT	*The Book of Lieh-Tzu,* tr. A.C. Graham. See *Acknowledgements.*
CB	*The Cosmic Blueprint: Order and Complexity at the Edge of Chaos,* Paul Davies.
CDB1–2	*Charaṇdās Jī kī Bānī,* 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
CDS	*Contemplative Disciplines in Sufism,* Mir Valiuddin, ed. Gulshan Khakee.
CDSS	*The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English,* Geza Vermes. See *Acknowledgements.*
CEI	*The Concise Encyclop(a)edia of Islam,* Cyril Glassé. See *Acknowledgements.*
CH	*The Clementine Homilies,* tr. Thomas Smith *et al.*
CL	*Closer to the Light: Learning from the Near-Death Experiences of Children,* Melvin Morse with Paul Perry.
COT	*The Compass of Truth (Risala-i-Haq-Numa),* Muhammad Dara Shikoh, tr. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu.
CPM	*The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans,* tr. E.S. Drower. See *Acknowledgements.*
CPS	*Commentaire sur les paradoxes des soufis (Sharh-e Shathīyāt),* Ruzbehan Baqli Shirazi, ed. Henry Corbin.
CTPD	*The Complete Text of the Pahlavi Dinkard,* 2 Parts, ed. D.M. Madan.
CTW	*Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings,* tr. Burton Watson. See *Acknowledgements.*
CWJC1–3	*Complete Works of St John of the Cross,* 3 vols.-in-one, tr. & ed. E. Allison Peers. See *Acknowledgements.*
DCM	*Dadu: The Compassionate Mystic,* K.N. Upadhyaya.
DDB1–2	*Dādū Dayāl kī Bānī,* 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
DDS	*Dhanī Dharamdās Jī kī Shabdāvalī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
DF	*Divine Flashes,* Fakhruddin 'Iraqi, tr. W.C. Chittick and P.L. Wilson.

DHA	*Dīvān-i Khwājah Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzī,* ed. Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Anjavī Shīrāzī.
DHM	*Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ;* Malik Ghulām Muḥammad & Sons.
DHWC	*The Dīvān-i-Ḥāfiẓ,* 2 vols., Khwāja Shamsu-d-Dīn Muḥammad-i-Ḥāfiẓ-i-Shīrāzī, tr. H. Wilberforce Clarke.
DIH	*Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ,* ed. Qāzi Sajjād Ḥusayn.
DL	*Divine Light,* Maharaj Charan Singh.
DP1–4	*The Dialogues of Plato,* 4 vols., tr. B. Jowett.
DRA	*Discourses of Rūmī,* tr. A.J. Arberry.
DSTR	*Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz,* Rūmī; Munshi Naval Kishore Press.
DSZ	*The Divine Songs of Zarathustra,* I.J.S. Taraporewala.
EDP	*The Etheric Double,* Arthur E. Powell.
ESHS1–4	*Sancti Ephraemi Syri Hymni et Sermones,* 4 vols., T.J. Lamy.
FBM	*The Five Books of Moses,* tr. with commentary & notes, Everett Fox. See *Acknowledgements.*
FCWP	*Fools Crow: Wisdom and Power,* Thomas E. Mails. See *Acknowledgements.*
FH	*Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam,* Ibn al-ʻArabī, ed. Abū al-ʻAlāʼ ʻAfīfī.
FLI	*Farhang-i Lughāt va-Iṣṭilāḥāt va-Taʻbīrāt-i ʻIrfānī,* Sayyid Jaʻfar Sajjādī.
FLTM1–9	*Farhang-i Lughāt va-Taʻbīrāt-i Maśnavī,* 9 vols., Ṣādiq Gawharīn.
FNI1–15	*Farhang-i Nūrbakhsh: Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Taṣawwuf,* 15 vols., Javād Nūrbakhsh.
GJB	*The Gnostic John the Baptizer: Selections from the Mandaean John-Book,* G.R.S. Mead.
GR	*Majmūʻah-ʼi Āśār-i Shaykh Maḥmūd Shabistarī: Gulshan-i Rāz, Saʻādat-i Nāmah, Ḥaqq al-Yaqīn, Mirʼāt al-Muḥaqqiqīn, Maratib al-ʻârifīn,* ed. Ṣamad Muwaḥḥid.
GS	*The Gnostic Scriptures,* Bentley Layton.
GSB	*Gulāl Sāhib kī Bānī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
GSR	*Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia,* tr. H-J. Klimkeit. See *Acknowledgements.*
GST	*Glossary of Sufi Technical Terms,* ʻAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshāni, tr. Nabil Safwat.
GSV	*Gheranda Samhita,* tr. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu. See *Acknowledgements.*
GVM	*The Great Vohu Manah and the Apostle of God,* G. Widengren. See *Acknowledgements.*
HA	*Haft Awrang,* ʻAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, ed. Murtażā Gīlānī.
HETI	"The Heart: The Eye and Temple of the Imaginal, According to Ebno'l-ʻArabi and Tantric Buddhism", Hugh Urban.
HHH	*Hesiod: The Homeric Hymns and Homerica,* tr. Hugh G. Evelyn-White.

HMP	*Hindu Mythology: Vedic and Puranic,* W.J. Wilkins.
HPW	*Heraclitus,* P. Wheelwright. See *Acknowledgements.*
HQSA	*The Holy Qur'ān: English Translation of the Meaning and Commentary;* Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.
HR2	*Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan, Chinesisch-Turkistan II,* F.W.K. Müller.
HS	*The Hymn of the Soul: Contained in the Syriac Acts of Thomas,* ed. & tr. A.A. Bevan.
HSC	*The Heritage of Sufism,* 3 vols., Leonard Lewisohn; vol. 1: *Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi.* See *Acknowledgements.*
HTU	*One Hundred and Twelve Upanishads and Their Philosophy,* A.N. Bhaṭṭāchārya.
HVP	*Commentary of Hierocles on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras,* A. Dacier, tr. N. Rowe.
HWP	*History of Western Philosophy,* Bertrand Russell.
HYP	*Hatha Yoga Pradipika,* tr. Pancham Singh.
ICW	*I Ching or Book of Changes: The Richard Wilhelm Translation,* tr. Cary F. Baynes.
ID	*Icanchu's Drum: An Orientation to Meaning in South American Religions,* Lawrence E. Sullivan.
IK	*al-Insān al-Kāmil,* 'Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī, ed. M. Molé.
IL	*The Inner Life,* Charles W. Leadbeater (abridged from the author's original 2 vol., 1910–11 edn.).
ILP	*Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras or Pythagoric Life,* Thomas Taylor.
JB	*The Jerusalem Bible* (1966). See *Acknowledgements.*
JCL	*The CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library (The Soncino Talmud, The Soncino Midrash Rabbah, The Soncino Zohar, The Bible);* Institute for Computers in Jewish Life & Davka Corporation.
JM	*Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer,* M. Lidzbarski (German Translation).
JMM	*Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer,* M. Lidzbarski (Mandaean Text).
KA1–10	*Kashf al-Asrār va-'Uddat al-Abrār,* 10 vols., Abū al-Fażl Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī, ed. 'Alī Aṣghar Ḥikmat.
KB	*The Jerusalem Bible,* English text rev. & ed. Harold Fisch; Koren Publishers. See *Acknowledgements.*
KDS1–2	*Kullīyāt-i Dīvān-i Shams: Maulānā Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Mashhūr bi Maulavī,* 2 vols., B. Furūzānfar.
KFF	*Kitāb Fīhi mā Fīhi,* Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, ed. B. Furūzānfar.
KG	*Kabīr Granthāvalī,* ed. Shyām Sundardās.
KHI	*Kullīyāt-i Shaykh Fakhr al-dīn Ibrāhīm Hamadānī 'Irāqī,* ed. Sa'īd Nafīsī.

KI	*The Koran Interpreted,* 2 vols., tr. A.J. Arberry. See *Acknowledgements.*
KJV	*The Authorized Version of the Bible (The King James Bible)* [1611]. See *Acknowledgements.*
KM	*Kashf al-Mahjūb: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufiism,* 'Alī b. 'Uthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, ed. & tr. R.A. Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*
KOT	*The Kephalaia of the Teacher: The Edited Coptic Manichaean Texts in Translation with Commentry,* Iain Gardner. See *Acknowledgements.*
KSB	*Kabīr Sāhib kā Bījak;* Belvedere Printing Works.
KSD1–10	*Kullīyāt-i Shams yā Dīvān-i Kabīr (Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz),* 10 vols., ed. B. Furūzānfar.
KSS	*Kabīr Sākhī Sangrah;* Belvedere Printing Works.
KSS1–4	*Kabīr Sāhib kī Shabdāvalī,* 4 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
KT	*Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt,* Jurjānī, ed. G. Flügel.
LAL	*Life After Life,* Raymond A. Moody.
LB	*Legends of the Bible,* Louis Ginzberg, tr. from German, Henrietta Szold. See *Acknowledgements.*
LJCD	*Legends of the Jews* (CD-ROM), Louis Ginzberg. See *Acknowledgements.*
LSMH	"Lower (Second?) Section of the Manichaean Hymns", tr. Tsui Chi. See *Acknowledgements.*
LTTN	*Lao Tzu:* Text, Notes and Comments, Ch'en Ku-ying, tr. & adapted Rhett Y.W. Young and Roger T. Ames.
MA	*The Master Answers,* Maharaj Charan Singh.
MAA	"The Mythological Acts of the Apostles", A.S. Lewis.
MBS	*Mīrābāī kī Shabdāvalī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
MDB	*Malūkdās Jī kī Bānī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
MDI	*Mystical Dimensions of Islam,* Annemarie Schimmel.
MDL	*Mira: The Divine Lover,* V.K. Sethi.
MEM	"Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism", G. Widengren. See *Acknowledgements.*
MGK	*The Meaning of the Glorious Koran,* Marmaduke Pickthall.
MGR	*The Myths of Greece and Rome,* H.A. Guerber.
MHCP	*The Manichaean Hymn-Cycles in Parthian,* M. Boyce. See *Acknowledgements.*
MHK	*Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah wa-Miftāḥ al-Kifāyah,* 'Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd Qāshānī, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī.
MJR1–8	*The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī,* 8 vols., ed. & tr. with notes & commentary R.A. Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*
ML	*Manichaean Literature,* J.P. Asmussen. See *Acknowledgements.*
MM	*Mani and Manichaeism,* G. Widengren.

MM1–3	"Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan", 3 vols., F.C. Andreas and W.B. Henning.
MMF1	*Muntahá al-Madārik*, vol. 1, al-Farqānī.
MMS	*Sri Guru Granth Sahib: English and Punjabi Translation*, 8 vols., tr. Manmohan Singh.
MPB	*A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Part II, ed. & tr. C.R.C. Allbery. See *Acknowledgements*.
MSF	*Majmū'ah Sivum-i Muṣannafāt* (includes 13 *Risālah*), Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhravardī.
MSS	*Mīrā Sudhā Sindhu;* Shrī Mīrā Prakāshan Samiti.
MUM	*Minor Upanishads*, tr. Swami Madhavananda. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS11	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XI: *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2–5 and VI*, ed. Douglas M. Parrott. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS20	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XX: *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7*, vol. 1, ed. Bentley Layton. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS28	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXVIII: *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS30	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXX: *Nag Hammadi Codex VII, XIII*, ed. Birger A. Pearson. See *Acknowledgements*.
NN	*Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ fī Sharḥ Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ*, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī; ed. W.C. Chittick.
NR1–2	*The Nestorians and Their Rituals*, 2 vols., G.P. Badger.
OIP	*Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, M. Hiriyanna.
OKS	*On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, Gershom G. Scholem. See *Acknowledgements*.
OS	*Occult Science: An Outline*, Rudolf Steiner, tr. George & Mary Adams. See *Acknowledgements*.
OST1	*Original Sanskrit Texts: On the Origin and History of the People of India, Their Religion and Institutions*, vol. 1, tr. J. Muir.
OTP1–2	*The Old Testament Pseudoepigrapha*, 2 vols., ed. J.H. Charlesworth. See *Acknowledgements*.
PB	*The Prayer Book: Weekday, Sabbath and Festival*, including *Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers)*, tr. Ben Zion Bokser. See *Acknowledgements*.
PCW1–10	*Philo*, 10 vols., tr. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker. See *Acknowledgements*.
PD	*The Poetical Works of Dryden*, George R. Noyes.
PM1–5	*Philosophy of the Masters*, 5 vols., Huzur Maharaj Sawan Singh.
PNC	*A Pair of Naṣoraean Commentaries (Two Priestly Documents): The Great "First World" and the Lesser "First World"*, tr. E.S. Drower. See *Acknowledgements*.
PP1–10	*The Padma Purāṇa*, 10 vols., tr. Dr N.A. Deshpande. See *Acknowledgements*.

PS	*Pistis Sophia,* tr. Violet MacDermot.
PSB1–3	*Paltū Sāhib kī Bānī,* 3 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
PSGG	*Pistis Sophia: A Gnostic Gospel,* G.R.S. Mead.
PU	*The Principal Upaniṣads,* tr. S. Radhakrishnan.
QAL	*al-Qur'an,* tr. Syed Abdul Latif.
RCM	*Shrī Rām Charit Mānas,* Tulsīdās; Gītā Press.
RG	*The Robe of Glory,* John Davidson.
RLI	*Rīsālah-yi Lamaʻāt va-Rīsālah-yi Iṣṭilāḥāt,* Fakhr al-Dīn ʻIrāqī, ed. Javād-i Nūrbakhsh.
RMP	*A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian,* M. Boyce.
RNV1–4	*Rasā'il Shāh Niʻmatullāhī Valī,* 4 vols., ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh.
SAC	"Shamanism Among the Avá-Chiripá", Miguel A. Bartolomé. See *Acknowledgements.*
SB	*Sar Bachan,* Soami Ji Maharaj (Swami Shiv Dayal Singh).
SBB	*Sahajobāī kī Bānī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
SBE	*Sultan Bahu,* J.R. Puri and K.S. Khak.
SBJT	*The Schocken Book of Jewish Mystical Testimonies,* Louis Jacobs.
SBP	*Sār Bachan Chhand-Band (Sār Bachan Poetry),* Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh.
SBS1–2	*Sant Bānī Sangrah,* 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
SBU	*Ḥaẓrat Sulṭān Bāhū;* Radha Soami Satsang Beas (Urdu).
SCMP	*Studies in the Coptic Manichaean Psalm-Book,* T. Säve-Söderbergh.
SCT	*Sources of Chinese Tradition,* vol. 1, compiled T. de Bary, Wing-tsih Chan and Burton Watson, *et al.*
SD	*Sufism: A Dictionary with Profiles of Saint-Poets,* T.C. Rastogi.
SDMG	*A Study of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Greece,* H.B. Long.
SDST	*Selected Poems from the Dīvāni Shamsi Tabrīz,* ed. & tr. R.A. Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*
SG	*Spiritual Gems,* Maharaj Sawan Singh Ji.
SGR	*Mafātiḥ al-Iʻjāz fī Sharḥ-i Gulshan-i Rāz-i Maḥmūd Shabistarī,* Shaykh Muḥammad Lāhījī, ed. Kayvān Samīʻī.
SI	*The Soul of the Indian: An Interpretation,* Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa); Bison, 1980 [1911].
SKQ	*Sharḥ va-Tarjumah-'i Kalimāt-i Qiṣār Bābā Ṭāhir,* ascribed to *'Ayn al-Quḍat Hamadānī,* ed. Jawād Maqsūd.
SKS	*Self-Knowledge (Atmabodha),* tr. & commentary Swami Nikhilananda. See *Acknowledgements.*
SLO	*Spiritual Letters,* Baba Jaimal Singh Ji (1984 edn.).
SMIK1–13	*The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan,* 13 vols., Hazrat Inayat Khan.
SOS	*Science of the Soul,* Sardar Bahadur Maharaj Jagat Singh.
SPB	"Sadwēs and Pēsūs", Mary Boyce.

SPL	*The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rūmī,* William C. Chittick. See *Acknowledgements.*
SPZ	"Syrische Poesien", P.P. Zingerle.
SR	*The Serpent and the Rainbow,* Wade Davis.
SRB	*Sant Rohidās kī Bānī;* Shiv Shakti Prakāshan.
SS1–6	*Satsang Sangrah,* 6 vols., Mahārāj Charan Singh.
SSE1–15	*Sufi Symbolism: The Nurbakhsh Encyclopedia of Sufi Terminology,* 15 vols., Javad Nurbakhsh, tr. Terry Graham *et al.* See *Acknowledgements.*
SSR	*Shrī Sant Rohidās,* Ashok Prabhākar Kāmat.
SSV	*Siva Samhita,* tr. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu. See *Acknowledgements.*
ST	*Sharḥ-i Ta'arruf,* Abū Isḥāq Muḥammad ibn-i Ibrāhīm Bukhārī Kalābādī.
SWP	*Select Works of Plotinus,* tr. T. Taylor.
TAI	*Tadhkirat al-Awliyā',* Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār Nīshābūrī, ed. Muḥammad Isti'lāmī.
TAN1–2	*Tadhkirat al-Awliyā',* Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār Nīshābūrī, ed. R.A. Nicholson.
TAT	*Taṣawwuf va-Adabīyāt-i Taṣawwuf,* including *Mir'āt-i 'Ushshāq* (an anonymous glossary of Sufi terms), Y.E. Bertels, tr. from Russian into Persian by Sirus Izadi.
TBS	*Tattva Bodha of Sankaracharya,* tr. & commentary Swami Chinmayananda.
TC	*The Chakras,* Charles W. Leadbeater.
TDB	*Tulsīdās Jī kī Bārahmāsī,* Shri Goswāmī Tulsīdās Jī.
TGH1–3	*Thrice-Greatest Hermes,* 3 vols., G.R.S. Mead.
TMU	*Thirty Minor Upaniṣads,* tr. by K. Narayanasvami Aiyar.
TQH	*Tamhīdāt,* 'Ayn al-Quḍat Hamadānī, ed. Afif Osseiran.
TRCM	*Tulasidasa's Shri Rāmacharitamanasa: The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rama,* ed. & tr. R.C. Prasad.
TSH1–2	*Tulsī Sāhib Hāthrasvale kī Shabdāvalī,* 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
TSM	*Thus Saith The Master,* Maharaj Charan Singh.
TWT	*Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China,* Arthur Waley. See *Acknowledgements.*
TYN	*The New Testament,* tr. William Tyndale.
U1–4	*The Upanishads,* 4 vols., tr. & commentary Swami Nikhilananda. See *Acknowledgements.*
VE	*The Vedic Experience,* Raimundo Panikkar. See *Acknowledgements.*
VSY	*Vedāntasāra (The Essence of Vedānta) of Sadānanda Yogindra,* tr. Swāmī Nikhilānanda.

WP	*The Wisdom of the Prophet (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam),* Muhyī-d-Din ibn ‘Arabi, tr. (from Arabic to French) Titus Burckhardt, tr. (from French to English) Angela Culme-Seymour.
WTT	*The Writings of Tatian and Theophilus and the Clementine Recognitions,* tr. B.P. Pratten, Marcus Dods and Thomas Smith.
WZ1–3	*The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts,* 3 vols., arranged by Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby. See *Acknowledgements.*
ZSS1–5	*The Zohar,* 5 vols., tr. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon.

MAN AND THE COSMOS

5.1 THE NATURE OF MAN

THROUGHOUT THE AGES, mystics have consistently said that man's innermost reality is an immortal essence or soul. But this soul is not immediately apparent to him because it has become surrounded or veiled by lesser aspects of his being. These lesser aspects have been described in different ways according to the culture and the times. Some have said that the soul has taken on the coverings of mind and body. Others say that the soul has lost its pure, immortal garment of light, and has acquired garments of less worthy materials. Yet others have described man's being as consisting of so many layers of increasing purity with his essential being or soul lying at the heart of all. These are all ways of trying to describe the same indescribable reality.

Using more or less modern terminology to summarize this age-old wisdom, it can be said therefore that man's true self is an immortal soul. This soul is of the same essence as God, and has the potential to realize its essential unity with Him. As the soul has descended through the realms of creation, it has taken on coverings that enable it to function in these realms. Thus, when the soul enters the realm of the universal mind, it takes on the first aspects of a highly subtle or causal mind together with a causal body. When it descends into the astral realms, it acquires an astral mind and astral body. And when it takes birth in the physical realm, it is further covered by a physical or human mind, together with a physical body, suited for functioning in this world.

The different parts of man, higher and lower, are all integrated into one functioning whole. Just as the physical body is comprised of a complex multitude of integrally interacting organs and systems, so too are man's higher energies and bodies put together in a complex, yet integrated, manner. Some mystics have attempted to describe how the energies comprising this higher and more subtle constitution are reflected in the physical frame. They say that the human constitution is such that all regions and aspects of the creation (the macrocosm) are reflected or present within the human form as an epitome or microcosm of the whole. The entire creation is thus potentially accessible to a soul in human form, for, because of this arrangement, a human being has the necessary means by which to enter and exist in all realms of the creation.

It is this unique constitution, say the mystics, which gives man his divinely created role and purpose in creation. For it is only while in the human form, possessed of a complete microcosm of creation, that a soul can begin its journey back to God.

KEY ENTRIES: **Ādam, antaḥkaraṇa, chakra, city of nine gates, jān, kosha, man, neshamah, robe, rūḥ**.

āb (P) *Lit.* water; equivalent of the Arabic *mā'*. In traditional Islamic terms, following classical Greek philosophy, the physical world and all physical forms are made up of four elements *(arba' 'anāṣir):* air, fire, water and earth. These elements are subject to the influences of the four natures *(chahār ṭab')* of heat, cold, dryness and wetness.

See also: **arba' 'anāṣir**, **chahār ṭab'**, **jala**, **al-ummahāt al-arba'ah**.

āb-u gil (P) *Lit.* water *(āb)* and *(u)* clay *(gil);* water and earth; metaphorically, the human body. The expression conveys the limitations of the physical form, in contrast to the high spiritual potential of the human spirit:

> We have all been parts of Adam:
> we have heard those melodies in paradise.
> Although the water and earth *(āb-u gil)* (of our bodies)
> have caused a doubt to fall upon us,
> something of them comes (back) to our memory;
> But since it is mingled with the earth of sorrow,
> how should this treble and bass give the same delight?
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:736–38; cf. MJR4 pp.312–13*

It is the "water and earth" of the body that obscures vision of the spiritual treasure hidden within. Rūmī gives the example of Hilāl, "a spiritual adept and a man of illumined soul" who is "the groom and slave of a Muslim Amīr". The Amīr does not realize the spiritual status of his slave, because he does not see past the "clay" of the body to the spirit within:

> The Amīr was ignorant of his slave's real condition,
> for he had no discernment,
> but of the sort possessed by *Iblīs* (the devil).
> He saw the water and clay *(āb-u gil),*
> but not the treasure buried in it:
> He saw the five (senses) and the six (directions),
> but not the source of the five.
> The colour of earth *(ṭīn)* is manifest,
> the light of (true) religion is hidden:
> Such is the case with every prophet in the world.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:1137–39; cf. MJR6 p.321*

See also: **body of earth**, **ghaṭ**.

Ādam (A/P), **Adam** (He) The first man; the prototype of humanity; the father of all mankind. In Hebrew, *Adam* means man, from *adamah* (earth), from *adom* (red), referring to the reddish colour of earth. Adam is portrayed in the Bible as the first, primeval human being, the father of all humanity. He is generally understood to symbolize the fall of the soul from paradise, coming to live a life of hardship in this world. Hence, the rabbinic interpretation which takes Adam *(a-d-m)* as an acronym of *afar* (dust), *dam* (blood) and *marah* (gall).[1]

Like many of the biblical stories, the story of Adam, perhaps more than any other, has been the subject of numerous legendary and doctrinal embellishments in Jewish, Christian, gnostic, Mandaean, Manichaean, and Islamic religious culture. Many of the stories are shared by the various traditions, and have clearly been borrowed and reborrowed within the close-knit communities of the ancient Middle East. Adam's popularity is understandable, for human origins are naturally of great interest to people, whoever they may be. The quest for an answer to the origin of things, together with the love of a good story, have been the mainsprings from which much of the world's mythology has arisen.

In its simplest form, Adam represents the fall of the soul from the presence of God (Eden) into the world of matter where, as it says in *Genesis*, Adam and Eve are covered in "garments" or "coats of skins",[2] meaning the physical body. The second-century rabbis, however, read a different interpretation into the account of Adam's fall, based on a wordplay. The Hebrew word for skin is *'aur,* spelled with an *ayin (')*. The Hebrew for light is *'aur,* spelled with an *aleph ('),* which is unpronounced in modern Hebrew, and is usually omitted. The sound of these two words is similar, and some of the rabbis thus read the passage to mean that God gave "garments of light" to Adam and Eve, rather than "garments of skin":

> "And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skin *('aur),* and clothed them." In Rabbi Me'ir's *Torah,* it was found written, "garments of light *('aur)*": this refers to Adam's garments, which were like a torch (shedding radiance), broad at the bottom and narrow at the top. Isaac the Elder said: "They were as smooth as a fingernail and as beautiful as a jewel."
>
> *Midrash Rabbah, Genesis 20:12, JCL*

The rabbis used the wordplay to suggest that when Adam and Eve were banished from the garden of Eden, symbolizing the supernal realms, God gave them a 'garment' of His divine light to protect them while living on earth. Many later Kabbalists also interpreted the meaning to be 'garments of light',[3] although both interpretations appear to have been prevalent throughout.

In Kabbalist literature, the *Zohar* also discusses the biblical descriptions of the creation, linking the creation story of *Genesis* chapter 1 with the essentially different story of Adam and Eve in chapters 2 and 3:

> "And God said, 'Let there be light!': And there was light."[4] This is the original light which God created. This is the light of the eye. It is the light which God showed to Adam, and through which he was able to see from one end of the world to the other.
>
> It was the light which God showed to David who, on seeing it, burst forth into praise, saying, "O how abundant is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee."[5] It is the light through which God showed to Moses the Land of Israel – from Gilead to Dan.
>
> *Zohar 1:31b, ZSS1 pp.119–20, JCL*

"To see from one end of the world to the other" implies spiritual rather than physical vision. The light allowed Adam to see the meaning of the entire creation. There is also a suggestion that Adam, as the first Master or mystic, received spiritual knowledge from God, passing it on to David and Moses. Other passages from the *Zohar* describe in greater detail the lineage of those who received the light, mentioning Enoch and other biblical characters as well as David and Moses. The spiritual wisdom conveyed to Adam is depicted metaphorically as a "book", a symbolic interpretation of the *Genesis* passage which begins the account of the creation of man: "This is the book of the generations of Adam":[6]

> Rabbi Abba said: "God did indeed send down a book to Adam, from which he became acquainted with the supernal wisdom. It came later into the hands of the 'sons of God', the wise of their generation, and whoever was privileged to peruse it could learn from it supernal wisdom. This book was brought down to Adam by the 'master of mysteries', preceded by three messengers.
>
> "When Adam was expelled from the garden of Eden, he tried to keep hold of this book, but it flew out of his hands. He thereupon supplicated God with tears for its return, and it was given back to him, in order that wisdom might not be forgotten of men, and that they might strive to obtain knowledge of their Master. Tradition further tells us that Enoch also had a book, which came from the same place as the book of the generations of Adam."
>
> *Zohar 1:37b, ZSS1 p.139, JCL*

Likewise, in a more detailed account:

> "This is the book of the generations of Adam,"[7] *i.e.* those who inherited his likeness. Said Rabbi Isaac: "God showed Adam the visages

of all future generations, of all the wise men and all the kings that were destined to rule over Israel. When he saw David, who was destined to die as soon as he was born, he said, 'I will lend him seventy years from my life,' and so it came to pass.... Hence Adam's days fell short by seventy years of the thousand which he ought by right to have lived.

"God also showed him the wise men of each generation. When he came to Rabbi Akiva and saw his great learning, he rejoiced, but when he saw his martyrdom he was sorely grieved. Nevertheless, he exclaimed: 'How precious in mine eyes are Thy companions, O God; how mighty are the chiefs of them.'[8]

"'This is the book': literally so, as we have explained, *viz.* that when Adam was in the garden of Eden, God sent down to him a book by the hand of *Razi'el,* the angel in charge of the holy mysteries. In this book were supernal inscriptions containing the sacred wisdom, and seventy-two branches of wisdom expounded so as to show the formation of six hundred and seventy inscriptions of higher mysteries. In the middle of the book was a secret writing explaining the thousand and five hundred keys which were not revealed even to the holy angels, and all of which were locked up in this book until it came into the hands of Adam. When Adam obtained it, all the holy angels gathered round him to hear him read it, and when he began they exclaimed: 'Be Thou exalted, O Lord, above the heavens; let Thy glory be above all the earth.'[9]

"Thereupon the holy angel *Hadarni'el* was secretly sent to say to him: 'Adam, Adam, reveal not the glory of the Master, for to thee alone and not to the angels is the privilege given to know the glory of thy Master.' Therefore, he kept it by him secretly until he left the garden of Eden. While he was there he studied it diligently, and utilized constantly the gift of his Master until he discovered sublime mysteries which were not known even to the celestial ministers. When, however, he transgressed the command of his Master, the book flew away from him. Adam then beat his breast and wept, and entered the river Gihon up to his neck, so that his body became all wrinkled and his face haggard. God thereupon made a sign to *Rapha'el* to return to him the book, which he then studied for the rest of his life.

"Adam left it to his son Seth, who transmitted it in turn to his posterity, and so on until it came to Abraham, who learnt from it how to discern the glory of his Master, as has been said. Similarly, Enoch possessed a book through which he learnt to discern the divine glory."

Zohar 1:55a–b, ZSS1 pp.175–77, JCL

Traditional Jewish sources contain many interpretations of the meaning of Adam, and of stories concerning him, a number of which are retold in a compilation from the *Talmud*, *Midrash* (rabbinic commentaries) and other sources, by nineteenth-century scholar, Louis Ginzberg. One of the more interesting explores the physical, mental and spiritual nature of Adam. Included in it is a description of Adam's enormous size, strength and beauty – a belief which may have contributed to the later development of the idea of *Adam Kadmon*, the Primordial Man whose bodily parts symbolize creation, and who is reflected in man, the microcosm of all creation.

There is also a discussion concerning the nature of the soul and Adam's spiritual stature as a prophet who knew all things:

> His spiritual qualities kept pace with his personal charm, for God had fashioned his soul with particular care. She is the image of God, and as God fills the world, so the soul fills the human body; as God sees all things, and is seen by none, so the soul sees, but cannot be seen; as God guides the world, so the soul guides the body; as God in His holiness is pure, so is the soul; and as God dwells in secret, so does the soul.
>
> When God was about to put a soul into Adam's clodlike body, He said: "At which point shall I breathe the soul into him? Into the mouth? Nay, for he will use it to speak ill of his fellow man. Into the eyes? With them, he will wink lustfully. Into the ears? They will hearken to slander and blasphemy. I will breathe her into his nostrils; as they discern the unclean and reject it, and take in the fragrant, so the pious will shun sin, and will cleave to the words of the *Torah*."
>
> The perfections of Adam's soul showed themselves as soon as he received her, indeed, while he was still without life. In the hour that intervened between breathing a soul into the first man and his becoming alive, God revealed the whole history of mankind to him. He showed him each generation and its leaders; each generation and its prophets; each generation and its teachers; each generation and its scholars; each generation and its statesmen; each generation and its judges; each generation and its pious members; each generation and its average, commonplace members; and each generation and its impious members. The tale of their years, the number of their days, the reckoning of their hours, and the measure of their steps, all were made known unto him.
>
> *"The Ideal Man", from Midrashic Sources, in LB pp.31–32, LJCD*

Another story describes how Adam was created from earth of different colours, gathered from all the directions of the world. The legend questions why God has bothered to create Adam, seeing that his lifespan is so short and his nature so sinful. God's reply reveals an underlying belief in the power of atonement, as well as His great mercy and forgiveness:

> When at last the assent of the angels to the creation of man was given, God said to Gabriel: "Go and fetch me dust from the four corners of the earth, and I will create man therewith." Gabriel went forth to do the bidding of the Lord, but the earth drove him away, and refused to let him gather up dust from it. Gabriel remonstrated: "Why, O earth, dost thou not hearken unto the voice of the Lord, who founded thee upon the waters without props or pillars?" The earth replied, and said: "I am destined to become a curse, and to be cursed through man, and if God himself does not take the dust from me, no one else shall ever do it." When God heard this, He stretched out His hand, took of the dust of the ground, and created the first man therewith.
>
> Of set purpose the dust was taken from all four corners of the earth, so that if a man from the east should happen to die in the west, or a man from the west in the east, the earth should not dare refuse to receive the dead, and tell him to go whence he was taken. Wherever a man chances to die, and wheresoever he is buried, there will he return to the earth from which he sprang. Also, the dust was of various colours – red, black, white and green – red for the blood, black for the bowels, white for the bones and veins, and green for the pale skin.
>
> At this early moment, the *Torah* interfered. She addressed herself to God: "O Lord of the world! The world is Thine, Thou canst do with it as seemeth good in Thine eyes. But the man Thou art now creating will be few of days and full of trouble and sin. If it be not Thy purpose to have forbearance and patience with him, it were better not to call him into being." God replied, "Is it for naught I am called long-suffering and merciful?"
>
> The grace and lovingkindness of God revealed themselves particularly in His taking one spoonful of dust from the spot where in time to come the altar would stand, saying, "I shall take man from the place of atonement, that he may endure."
>
> *"The Creation of Adam", from Midrashic Sources, in LB pp.28–29, LJCD*

Early Christian sources contain comparatively little legendary elaboration of the *Genesis* story, generally interpreting Adam simply as a symbol of the soul's fall from paradise (Eden). The role of Jesus was to return the soul to the paradise it once had known. Thus, the fourth-century Syrian Christian, Ephraim Syrus, writes of the "Fruit" from the Tree of Life that grants eternal life, which "Adam did not taste", as the mystic Bread of Life or the Word, symbolized in the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist. Here, it is is clear that Eden is to be understood as the eternal "paradise":

He opens unto you his door,
 and makes you enter Eden....
The Fruit that Adam did not taste in paradise,
 today is placed in our mouths with joy.
Ephraim Syrus, ESHS1 111:10, 113:17, MEM p.128

The gnostics of early Christian times retold the story in a variety of fantastical adventures, generally associated with the origins of man and the creation. Characteristically, Adam, the bodily man, is fashioned by the evil powers or *archons* who have formed this world in order to imprison the 'image' of the Divine (the soul) in matter. It is a story of the fall of the soul, and of its eventual return to the realms of light.

For one of the earliest gnostic groups, the Mandaeans, who trace their descent from John the Baptist, yet somehow survived in the marshlands of Iran and Iraq until the twentieth century, Adam has a significant role to play. He appears frequently in their literature as *Adam Qadmaia* (Primal Adam), *Adam Kasia* (Secret or Hidden Adam) and *Adam* or *Adam Pagria* (physical man). In one text, the story is related of the creation of this Primal Adam as the first-born Son of God, the first and primary creative Power or emanation. As this Primal Adam descends through the higher realms of creation, 'he' ultimately comes to the physical universe, becoming man. The story then continues:

Then he (Adam) arose
 and sat by a well of vain imaginings, and said:
"I am a king without peer!
I am lord of the whole world!"

He travelled on into all the world
 until he came and rested on a mountain.
Then he gazed about and perceived a stream
 coming from beneath the mountain.

Then he prostrated himself,
 cast himself down on his face and said:
"Is there, then, one loftier and mightier than I?
For this is a stream of Living Waters,
 pure white waters which come
 from worlds without limit or count!"

Then his mind became disquieted –
 he pondered and said:

"I said that there was no king greater than I,
but now I know that there exists
that which is greater than myself.
I pray that I may see Him
and take Him for my Companion."

Then a Voice came from above,
at which he fell upon his face,
and was powerless to rise,
and stayed fallen on his face
until *Ayar-Dakia* (Pure Spirit) came –
And in his right hand he was carrying a Letter.

Then Adam took the Letter into his right hand,
smelt at it, sneezed, prayed (meditated),
and praised the King who is all light, and said:
"I beseech You for lofty strength like Your own."

Then a Voice came to him from above,
and it sent *Mahzian*-the-Word.
In his hand, he was carrying a Letter,
and he came towards him (Adam),
and gave the Letter into Adam's right hand.
And Adam kissed it three hundred and sixty times,
then opened it, but understood not what was in it.
But he rejoiced in his mind,
and prostrated himself before *Mahzian*-the-Word,
and thereafter arose, and understood the ABG (*i.e.* ABC).
And, little by little, comprehended all *Nāṣīrūtha.*

Alma Rishaia Rba 99–135; cf. PNC pp.6–7

The story is the age-old 'gnostic myth'. Adam, the soul, comes into this world, and becomes lost in his own ego and sense of self-importance. He "sat by a well of vain imaginings". So he continues until he reaches a "mountain" from which arises a "stream of Living Waters". Mountains signify the inner regions where the stream of the Word flows freely, so perhaps the intended meaning is that Adam is given some mystic vision. At any rate, his experience makes him rapidly realize his folly in thinking that he was "a king without peer". Making a wise choice, he immediately wishes to take the companionship of the higher and divine King whose presence he has sensed.

No sooner has this desire formed in his mind than his wish is granted. "From above", meaning from within, he hears the "Voice" or Word, and the

Holy Spirit comes to him bearing a "Letter" – another metaphor used for the Word in gnostic literature.

Adam "smelt at it": he breathes in the divine Fragrance of the Breath of God, and immediately he sneezes. In Semitic folklore, sneezing is indicative of having awakened, since only a wakeful person will sneeze. In this case, it represents Adam's spiritual awakening, arising from his breathing of the spiritual fragrance of the "Letter". The Breath of God and the Fragrance of God are two common metaphors for the Word. Adam then prays – he meditates and begs God for the spiritual strength of God Himself.

Mahzian-the-Word, one of the many mythical Saviours of Mandaean literature, is therefore sent, personally delivering the Letter to Adam. Adam is very happy, symbolized by his kissing the Letter "three hundred and sixty times". He then opens the Letter – is initiated – and is taught how to contact and 'read' the contents of the mystic letter. But, to begin with, he does not understand it. Nevertheless, he is in bliss: "He rejoiced in his mind." So he surrenders himself to his Saviour and, subsequently, "little by little, comprehended all *Nāṣīrūtha*" – a Mandaean term for the highest mystic truth and the experience of it.

Mandaean literature contains many short anecdotes such as this, which repeat, in different ways, the essence of the soul's history of descent and ascent. In a similar allegory, a divine Messenger is sent to the "corporeal Adam" who cries "with a Call into the tumult of the world". The "Call" is once again an allusion to the audibility of the mystic Voice or Word. The story continues:

> At the Voice of the Messenger,
> Adam, who was lying down, awakened.
> Adam, who was lying down, awakened
> and went to meet the Messenger, (saying):
> "Come in peace, O Messenger,
> Apostle of Life, who has come
> from the House of my Father!
> How precious and beautiful is Life,
> dwelling in its own abode.
> How can such a throne have been set up for me,
> while I, in my form of darkness, sit here wailing?"
>
> The Messenger answered and said to the corporeal Adam: …
> "I have come and will instruct you, Adam,
> in order to save you from this world.
> Hearken and listen, and be instructed,
> and ascend with victory to the place of light!"
>
> *Mandaean John-Book; cf. JM p.57, MEM pp.76–77*

Adam is "lying down", asleep and unconscious, lost in the mind and the senses of this world. Upon receiving the Call, his consciousness is awakened and he goes forward "to meet the Messenger". Adam welcomes the Messenger and expresses his delight that the Messenger has come to his human form, lost in the misery of this world, yet longing for release – "while I, in my form of darkness, sit here wailing".

The Messenger replies that Adam's longing has been heard by God and that he, the Messenger, has been sent in order to effect Adam's salvation from the world. "Hearken and listen, and be instructed," says the Messenger, then you will be able to return to God, the "place of light".

Islamic sources, including the *Qur'ān,* have also retold and interpreted the story of Adam in a variety of ways, drawing largely upon earlier Jewish sources. The *Qur'ān* itself is full of biblical references, and extensions of biblical narratives. According to the *Qur'ān,* God created Adam in "the best of forms *(aḥsani taqwīm)*"[10] – the noblest form among all creatures. Echoing *Genesis,*[11] a *ḥadīth* (traditional saying of Muḥammad) adds, "*Allāh* created Adam in His image *('alá ṣūratihi).*"[12]

According to the *Qur'ān,* Adam is created by *Allāh* to be His vicegerent *(khalīfah)* – one appointed to exercise some of the powers of the other – on earth. *Allāh* makes an agreement with Adam, and He then warns the angels that He is about to place a substitute *(khalīfah)* on earth, asking the angels to bow down to him.[13] At first, the angels refuse, but then *Allāh* teaches Adam all "the Names":

> And He taught Adam the Names, all of them.
>
> *Qur'ān 2:31, KI*

Since these "Names" are unknown to the angels, they all recognize Adam's superiority, and pay homage. All, that is, except *Iblīs* (from the Greek *diabolos,* the devil) who, for his disobedience, is expelled from paradise. *Allāh* also forbids Adam and Eve to eat of a particular tree in "the garden", but *Shayṭān* (Satan) – not the serpent – appears and whispers to them that *Allāh* has made the restriction because he does not want them to live eternally, like the angels. So they eat the fruit of the tree, realize their nakedness, and cover themselves with leaves. *Allāh* then proclaims eternal enmity between man and *Shayṭān,* and Adam repents.[14]

Adam being taught the Names is an extension of the *Genesis* story, where Adam names all the creatures:

> And out of the ground the Lord God
> formed every beast of the field,
> and every fowl of the air;
> And brought them unto Adam
> to see what he would call them:

> And whatsoever Adam called every living creature,
> that was the name thereof.
> And Adam gave names to all cattle,
> and to the fowl of the air,
> and to every beast of the field;
> But for Adam there was not found a helpmate for him.
> *Genesis 2:19–20; cf. KJV*

In Islamic thought, "all the Names" is generally interpreted to mean that *Allāh* taught Adam all *His* Names *(Asmā');* that is, those words by which (in Islamic tradition) He describes Himself and by which the attributes of divinity become known to human beings. But the verse can also be translated, "He taught Adam the names of all things," and other interpretations suggest that Adam's knowledge of "the names of all things" refers to the human potential to comprehend the inner nature of everything.

Later Islamic tradition has further embellished the story. It is said that when God wanted to create Adam, He sent the archangels *Jabra'īl,* then *Mīkhā'īl,* then *Isrāfīl* to collect a handful of earth, but earth refused to give the clay for this purpose. Finally, *'Izrā'īl,* the angel of death, succeeded in wresting the clay from earth, taking some red, white and black clay, so that men could be made of different colours.

After Adam was created, *Iblīs* went in at his mouth and emerged from his anus, and God breathed His Spirit into his brain. Thus, this archetype of man contains within himself, right from the beginning, the opposing forces which Sufis later spoke of as *rūḥ* (spirit) and *nafs* (lower mind), or as *al-rūḥ al-insānīyah* (the human spirit) and the *al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī* (the animal spirit).

In Islam, the first sin was committed by *Iblīs* – disobedience born of pride, the prototype of all disobedience to the divine will. Damned, *Iblīs* went on to seduce Adam, and secure his fall. The fall is the error of seeing the world, ego and multiplicity as real, instead of God who is absolute and complete and, therefore, the only reality. To see anything as real other than God is to commit the sin of *shirk* (association). It indicates a state which does not allow the possibility of real surrender to God, for surrender implies realization of His sole and absolute reality. The error is remedied only by inner realization that God is the only reality. Such a realization restores man to the state of Adam before the fall.

In Islamic belief, Adam was also the first prophet; and Sufis call him the first Sufi. Adam is also called the 'spirit of the world *(rūḥ al-'ālam)*'. The fact that Adam knows "all the Names" also implies that he is the microcosm of the creation. He contains all things within himself and can know or experience all parts of the creation. This is a privilege denied to the angels. The Persian mystic, 'Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī, in his book *al-Insān al-Kāmil (The Perfect Man)* writes:

> Know that Adam is the copy and replica of the two worlds, both here and beyond. Anything which can be found in both worlds can be found in him.... Because, in the hierarchy of this creation, the human appeared last, so it is clear that he is the "fruit" of the tree of creation, and when he becomes mature (wise), he is complete.
>
> *Nasafī, al-Insān al-Kāmil 3:9, 4:1, IK pp.64, 72*

Another description of the human form is given by the Sufi poet Jāmī:

> What is Adam? – An all-encompassing meeting-point *(barzakh)*,
> a creature's face, but within him God *(al-Ḥaqq)*.
> He is an epitome of God's incomparable Attributes and Essence.
> He is linked to the subtleties of the realm of power *(jabarūt)*,
> he contains the truths of the angelic realms *(malakūt)*.
> Inwardly, he is immersed in the sea of Unity,
> outwardly, he stands in thirst on the shores of diversity.
> There is not even one among God's qualities
> which is not apparent in man's totality.
> He (God) is all-seeing, all-hearing, all-knowing,
> He is the Speaker, the One who wills, the Living, the Omnipotent.
> Likewise, all the realities of the universe,
> all things, are included in him (man) –
> Whether the highest heavens or the basic elements,
> whether animal, vegetable or mineral.
> All forms of good and bad are within him,
> the characters of demon and devil are inherent in him.
> If he were not the mirror of the Eternal,
> why would angels have bowed before him with reverence?
> Of pure and holy countenance was he the picture:
> if *Iblīs* (the devil) did not recognize this, what does it matter?
> Whatever is concealed within (the saying),
> "I was a hidden treasure (and I wanted to be known),"[15]
> God has revealed it all in man.
> Man's existence is the ultimate reason
> for His bringing the creation into being.
> Divine *gnosis* was the reason behind the creation,
> and Adam is the perfect manifestation of such *gnosis*.
>
> *Jāmī, Haft Awrang, HA p.68, in FNI6 pp.60–61*

This being the status of man, Nasafī explains that the ultimate task of a human being is to know himself:

The first revelation *(sūrah)* revealed to Muḥammad, Prophet of Islam, was:

> In the name of God, Most Gracious,
>   Most Merciful, read!
> In the name of God the Creator,
>   who created the human from the embryo, read!
> And your God is giving honours.[16]

This means, "Know thyself!", then "Know thy Maker!". Read this little book (yourself) so you can understand that grand book (Himself)! Know your self and your actions, so you would know Him and His acts.

Nasafī, al-Insān al-Kāmil, Rasā'il-i Iẓāfī 1:8, IK p.358

Shaykh Maḥmūd Shabistarī has also beautifully described the status of human beings:

> You know all the Names
>   because you are the image of the One named.
> You are the manifestation of power, knowledge and will,
>   O lucky one!
> You hear, you see, you speak, you are alive.
> You continue living not by your own will,
>   but by God's order.
> By nature, your power is ten thousand,
>   but by His will goes beyond counts and measures.

Shabistarī, Gulshan-i Rāz (Introduction), GR p.55

He also says that the human body is a miniature replica of the creation, and its existence is the ultimate reason for creation:

> He breathed a little of His power into the Pen,
>   and thousands of images appeared on the tablet of Nonexistence.
> From that Breath *(Dam)* appeared the two worlds,
>   and from that Breath *(Dam)* appeared human life.
> Discrimination appeared in human wisdom,
>   and man then began to know the origin of things.
> When he saw himself as an individual,
>   he thought and wondered, "What am I?"

Shabistarī, Gulshan-i Rāz 4–7, GR p.67

Human beings appeared at the end,
 and the two worlds became parasitic to his essence.
For everything existing in the upper and lower worlds,
 a likeness is apparent in your body and soul.
You are that collectiveness which is the very oneness,
 you are that oneness which is the very collectiveness.
The world becomes man, and man becomes the world;
There is no better way to say this, but as it is already told....

In him the two worlds have come together:
Sometimes he is a man,
 sometimes he is the devil *(Iblīs)*.
Sometimes he is higher than the seven skies,
 sometimes he falls beneath the mass of earth.

Shabistarī, Gulshan-i Rāz (Introduction), GR p.52

Shabistarī also graphically portrays man's potential for divine knowledge:

The whole world is yours, yet you remain helpless:
 one more destitute than you has yet to be seen.
They have spoken to you of your Essence,
 so religious laws have been assigned for you to follow.
You are the kernel and the world the shell;
Know yourself: the life of the world is you.

The world of wisdom and world of the soul are your capital,
 the earth and sky your ornaments.
You are a likeness of the image of God:
Ask from yourself anything you may desire.

Shabistarī, Gulshan-i Rāz (Introduction), GR p.55

See also: **Adam Kadmon** (5.2), **Iblīs** (6.1), **al-Insān al-Kāmil** (▸2), **Isrāfīl** (4.2).

1. *Babylonian Talmud, Sotah* 5a; *cf. Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezer* 12.
2. *Genesis* 3:21.
3. Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism, OKS* p.175 (n.2).
4. *Genesis* 1:3.
5. *Psalm* 31:20.
6. *Genesis* 5:1.
7. *Genesis* 5:1.
8. *cf. Psalm* 139:17.
9. *cf. Psalm* 57:12.

10. *Qur'ān* 95:4.
11. *Genesis* 1:26–27.
12. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 8:74.246, *AMBF* 346; *cf.* in *MDI* p.188.
13. *Qur'ān* 2:30–38, 7:11–25, 17:61–65, 18:50, 20:116.
14. *Qur'ān* 7:19–25, 20:115–121.
15. *Ḥadīth, AMBF* 70, in *MDI* p.189.
16. *Qur'ān* 22:5, 23:14.

ādhār(a) chakra (S/H/Pu) See **mūla chakra**.

aether See **ether**.

agni (S/H) *Lit.* fire; esoterically, the fire *tattva,* one of the five *tattvas,* possessing both gross and subtle aspects; also, a Hindu deity.

See also: **agni** (6.2), **Agni** (4.2), **tattva**.

āgyā chakra (H) See **ājñā chakra**.

aham (S/H) *Lit.* I; the self. According to *Vedānta,* man's real self is *Brahman,* the absolute Reality, as expressed in the *mahāvākya* (great utterance), *"Ahaṃ Brahmāsmi* (I am *Brahman).*" The subject is explained in the *Upanishads:*

> In the beginning, this (universe) was the Self *(Virāj)* alone,
> in the shape of a person.
> He reflected and saw nothing else but His Self.
> He first said: "I am He."
> Therefore, He came to be known by the name I *(Aham).*
> Hence, even now, when a person is addressed,
> he first says: "It is I,"
> and then says whatever other name he may have.
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 1:4.1, U3 p.113*

Aham is also used for the individual ego, the *ahankār.* It then denotes the personality of man, individuality, self-consciousness, I-ness, ego or individual self.

See also: **ahaṃ Brahmāsmi**, **ahankāra** (▸2), **mahāvākya**.

ahaṃ Brahmāsmi (S) *Lit.* I *(ahaṃ)* am *(asmi) Brahman (Brahm);* a saying from the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* in the *Yajur Veda.* One of the four great Vedic sayings or *mahāvākyas* which affirm the oneness of the soul with *Brahman,* the ultimate Reality, highlighting the non-dualistic philosophy of the *Upanishads.* The fuller context reads:

> This (self) was indeed *Brahman* in the beginning.
> It knew itself only as "I am *Brahman.*"
> Therefore it became all.
> And whoever among the gods had this enlightenment,
> also became That *(Brahman).*
> It is the same with the seers *(ṛishis),*
> the same with men.
> The seer, Vāmadeva, having realized this (self) as That,
> came to know:
> "I was Manu and the sun."
> And to this day, whoever in a like manner
> knows the Self as "I am *Brahman,*"
> becomes all this (universe).
> Even the gods cannot prevent his becoming this,
> for he has become their Self.
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 1:4.10, U3 pp.122–23*

See also: **mahāvākya**.

aḥsan al-taqwīm, **aḥsani taqwīm** (A), **aḥsan-i taqvīm** (P) *Lit.* best *(aḥsan)* of *(i)* forms *(taqwīm);* the best of moulds, the goodliest form; an Islamic term for the human form, considered the highest in creation; also called *ashraf al-makhlūqāt* (the noblest of all created beings). The term comes from the *Qur'ān:*

> Certainly We have created man
> in the goodliest form *(aḥsani taqwīm);*
> Then We let him go down to the lowest depth.
>
> *Qur'ān 95:4, QAL*

The *Qur'ān* also says that man is higher than the angels: God made him vicegerent *(khalīfah),* and asked the angels to pay obeisance to him.[1]

According to a *ḥadīth* (tradition), "*Allāh* created Adam in His image *('alá ṣūratihi),*"[2] as in *Genesis:* "And God created man in His own image."[3] Man's life comes from the Spirit of God within him:

> I have fashioned him, and breathed into him my Spirit.
>
> *Qur'ān 15:29, 38:72, HQSA; cf. Genesis 1:7*

This is taken to mean that whatever is in this world and the spiritual worlds is contained in the human form. In the microcosm of man is reflected the entire macrocosm of creation. Hence, Rūzbihān Baqlī writes, quoting the *Qur'ān:*

> The form of Adam is the mirror of both worlds. Whatever has been put into these two kingdoms was made visible in human form. "And We will show them our signs in the horizons and in themselves."[4]
>
> *Rūzbihān, Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyāt 437 (in CPS), in MDI p.188*

See also: **Ādam**, **al-'ālam al-kabīr**, **al-'ālam al-ṣaghīr**, **amānah**.

1. *Qur'ān* 2:30–34.
2. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 8:74.246, *AMBF* 346; *cf.* in *MDI* p.188.
3. *Genesis* 1:27, *KJV.*
4. *Qur'ān* 41:53.

ajar(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(a)* old age *(jarā);* undecaying; not subject to aging or decay; ever youthful; imperishable, unchanging, immortal in the mystic sense; the essential nature of God, His creative Power and the soul itself:

> That infinite, unborn, undecaying *(ajara),* undying,
>   immortal and fearless self *(ātman)* is *Brahman.*
> He who knows this becomes the fearless *Brahman.*
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 4:4.25*

And:

> Only he is a worthy son
>   who practises devotion with all his mind,
>   and rids himself of death forever,
>   becoming immortal *(amar)* and imperishable *(ajar).*
>
> *Malūkdās, Bānī, Prem 33, MDB p.31*

See also: **ajar** (2.1), **immortality of the soul**.

ajarāvar (Pu) *Lit.* not becoming old *(ajar)* + superior *(āvar);* unaging, forever young; immortal in the mystic sense; hence, descriptive of both God and the soul:

> Thou agest not *(ajarāvar)* and art sublime:
> eternal art Thou, and all others pass off.
> He who contemplates the Name, the home of elixir, with love:
> his intensive agonies *(dukh)* are averted.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1009, MMS*

ājñā chakra (S), **āgyā chakra** (H) *Lit.* command *(ājñā, āgyā)* centre *(chakra)*, so called because this centre is the seat of the soul and mind in the physical body. All bodily functions are controlled in a hidden manner by the mind and its complex skein of subtle energies or forces. These receive their life or energy from the soul. The body and all its functions – physiological, biochemical and so on – are thus under the overall 'command' of the soul, but are administered and distributed by a multitude of highly organized and integrated subtle energies or ramifications of the mind. The *chakras* form a part of this subtle system, the *ājñā chakra* being the sixth and highest of the six *chakras* in the physical body. This centre is also known as the *do dal kanwal* (two-petalled lotus), the eye centre and by other names.

From a bodily point of view, the *ājñā chakra* administers and controls the five lower *chakras*. The external aspects of body function might be expected to reflect the more subtle, internal organizational system. This can be observed in the functioning of the neuroendocrine system, specifically in the pituitary gland and hypothalamus, which are situated in the forehead more or less behind the eyes. Between them, these two glands have their finger on the pulse of the five other major bodily endocrine centres, each one of which seems to be associated with one of the lower *chakras* and its related *tattva*. This system is beautifully balanced. When the hypothalamus stimulates the pituitary to stimulate one of the lower endocrine glands, the hormones produced by these lower glands inhibit, in their turn, both the hypothalamus and the pituitary, providing automatic feedback control.

The *ājñā chakra* is held in high regard by yogis. The *Shiva Saṃhitā* says:

> The two-petalled *chakra* known as *ājñā* is situated between the two eyebrows, and has the letters *ha* and *ksha;* its presiding adept is called *Shukla Mahākāla* (*lit.* white great time); its presiding goddess is called *Hākinī.*
>
> Within its petals is the eternal *bīja* (seed, the syllable *ṭha*), brilliant as the autumnal moon. Knowing it, the wise hermit is never pulled down.
>
> This is the great light held secret in all the *Tantras;* by contemplating on it, the highest attainment is reached; there is no doubt about it.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 5:96–98; cf. SSV p.69*

It is also at the *ājñā chakra* that the soul and mind can be concentrated by means of repetition *(sumiran, simran)* of names given by a *guru,* whence the inner Sound and light may be contacted, and the soul may really begin the mystic journey back to God. A human being has the potential to concentrate his mind at this point by means of repetition to such a degree that he operates from this centre even throughout the day. At this stage, he has acquired considerable mastery over his mind, emotions and senses, and does not let his mind spread out or scatter into the world. He applies his mind in a controlled and concentrated fashion to whatever requires attention.

The eye centre is also commonly known as the third eye. However, while the eye centre is normally equated with the sixth *chakra* in *piṇḍa,* some writers locate the third eye further in – at the *ashṭ dal kanwal* or eight-petalled centre in *aṇḍa.* In practical terms, the eye centre, as the seat of the mind and soul in the human form, and the centre at which the practitioner focuses his attention, consists of the entire area also known as the 'sky' of the body.

This 'sky' extends from the eye centre or *do dal kanwal* to *ashṭ dal kanwal,* the eight-petalled lotus. Between them lies the *antaḥkaraṇa* (in the four-petalled lotus) where flashes of inner light and echoes of inner sound are heard. *Ashṭ dal kanwal* itself is the 'doorway' to the astral region, and is above the 'sky' of the body. As concentration deepens through repetition of names, the attention moves deeper within, passing from the two-petalled centre in *piṇḍa* through to the *ashṭ dal kanwal* in *aṇḍa.* In this sense, the *ājñā chakra* may be understood as this entire area.

ajsām (A/P) (sg. *jism*) *Lit.* bodies. See **jism**.

ākāsh(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* sky, heaven, firmament, ether, space; a term with no real equivalent in English. Esoterically, *ākāsha* is the subtle focus or plane of energy potential out of which the physical universe is created. It is "an intangible substance which is the finest form of matter",[1] and the "all-pervading and all-penetrating substance found everywhere in the universe",[2] of which tangible objects are gross manifestations.

Ākāsha is the fifth *tattva* or subtle essence. It is the hidden energy which fills all space, and out of which the other four tattvic states are derived or manifested, like bubbles, waves or patterns on an ocean. In gross physical form, it is the subtle essence of the all-pervasive vacuum or space of the physical realm, of which even apparently solid substance is entirely comprised. It can be said to be space itself.

In its subtle form, when linked with the other four *tattvas* into human consciousness, *ākāsha* gives man a comprehension of how things are put together. The all-pervasive nature of *ākāsha* gives man the capacity to understand the whole of things. It is also *ākāsha* in its subtle form which gives a human being his identity or a perception of his place in the scheme of things. It provides him with an awareness of space and time. Human discrimination, the sense of human identity, foresight, the capacity to plan ahead, intelligent perception and so on are thus all attributable to the existence of the akashic element in man's subtle make-up. Since this concerns the immaterial aspects of human consciousness, this may be difficult to grasp. The gross physical aspects of a human being are perceptible to the physical senses. The subtle aspects of a human being, comprised of finer or more subtle energies, are not so readily discernible.

At a physical level, solids ('earth'), liquids ('water') and gases ('air') are only manifestations or patterns in the akashic energy of space, being derivatives of the gross physical *ākāsha.* Likewise, at a subtle level the human faculties of possession (earth), procreation (water), drive (fire) and acquisition (air) are derived from the inner sense of human identity; that is, from *ākāsha.*

When a person is out of balance – that is, when his attention is operating away from the eye centre, when he is not living consciously in the present moment – just so is his perception of the subtle akashic element imbalanced. He therefore gets an imbalanced view of his place in the scheme of things, an imbalanced human identity, that is: egotism. Judged from this point of view, practically every human being is out of balance.

It is in this manner that normal human faculties become infused with egotism. Possession plus ego becomes attachment; self-oriented indulgence in procreation becomes lust; drive plus ego rapidly bursts into the flames of anger whenever it is frustrated; and the natural ability to acquire things overbalances into greed as soon as ego is added. 'Pure ego' is a false sense of identity which expresses itself as pride, vanity, arrogance, haughtiness and selfishness of all kinds. Imbalance of the five *tattvas* in their subtle form thus gives rise to five basic human imperfections.

The principle of manifestation or emanation from a more subtle primordial state is present throughout creation, and there are many levels where this principle is exhibited. This can give rise to confusion unless the principle of reflection is recognized as being operative. In the *Upanishads,* for example, *ākāsha* is said to be the first material element to be evolved from *Brahman* or ultimate Reality. In fact, on account of its omnipresence and all-pervasiveness, *ākāsha* is often used as a symbol of *Brahman.* But this does not refer to the *ākāsha* from which the physical universe is manifested, but to a far higher level of the same subtle essence. Thus, the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* says:

> It is *ākāsha* from which all these creatures arise,
> and to which they again return.
> *Ākāsha* is older than them:
> *ākāsha* is their ultimate support.
>
> *Chhāndogya Upanishad 1:9.1*

And:

> The *Brahman* which has been thus described (as immortal)
> is the same as the *ākāsha* outside a person (physical space).
> The *ākāsha* which is outside a person
> is the same as that which is inside a person (subtle *ākāsha*).
> The *ākāsha* which is inside a person
> is the *ākāsha* within the (spiritual) heart.
> The *ākāsha (i.e. Brahman)* which is within the heart
> is omnipresent and unchanging.
>
> *Chhāndogya Upanishad 3:12.7–9, U4 pp.201–2*

Being the plane of potential out of or within which the lower plane is manifested, *ākāsha* also retains a memory of all that happens within the sphere of manifestation. This is essentially the memory of nature, often experienced as an atmosphere or vibration by people who are sensitive to it. The 'sky' or *ākāsha* of every level of creation has such a memory. Even the memory of an individual is of a similar character.

There are some differences of opinion among the various schools of Hindu philosophy as to the relationship of *ākāsha* and space. Some say that *ākāsha* and space are identical, others that *ākāsha* is not space itself, but what fills space. Hence, Hiriyanna writes of the assertions of some members of the Nyāya-Vaisheshika school:

> Time and space – these are conceived as objective realities; and they are infinite and partless like *ākāsha*.... Space, it should be added, is not the same as *ākāsha*. The latter stands here for what fills space – some ethereal substance of which sound is supposed to be the distinctive quality.
>
> *M. Hiriyanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, OIP pp.229–30*

'Ināyat Khān, on the other hand, describes *ākāsha* as a field of potentiality – an "accommodation", a "possibility", a "mould" – that is, a plenum of potential, ripe for external manifestation of more inward patterns. "The world in which we make our life is an *ākāsha*,"[3] he writes, also speaking of a hierarchy of *ākāshas* throughout creation, and equating an *ākāsha* with an *āsmān* (sky, heaven).[4]

See also: **akashic records** (5.2), **āsmān**, **chakra**, **ether**, **gagan** (4.1), **sunn** (4.1), **tattva**.

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1. Swāmī Vivekānanda, *The Upanishads, U1* p.85.
2. Swāmī Nikhilānanda, *The Upanishads, U1* p.85.

3. ‘Ināyat Khān, *Sufi Message, SMIK6* p.233.
4. ‘Ināyat Khān, *Sufi Message, SMIK1* pp.111, 147–53.

‘ālam al-kabīr, al- (A), **‘ālam-i kabīr** (P) *Lit.* the great *(kabīr)* world *(‘ālam):* the macrocosm; the creation, including all the *‘ālamīn* (worlds) contained within the microcosm *(al-‘ālam al-ṣaghīr)* of the human form. Rūmī also refers to the *‘ālam-i kabīr* as the *‘ālam-i akbar* and *‘ālam-i kubrá,* both being variants of *‘ālam-i kabīr.*

See also: **al-‘ālam al-ṣaghīr**.

‘ālam al-ṣaghīr, al- (A), **‘ālam-i ṣaghīr** (P) *Lit.* the small *(ṣaghīr)* world *(‘ālam):* the microcosm which is man. Mystics say that the human form is a perfect microcosm of the entire creation (the macrocosm), for everything lies within it, and through it everything can be contacted. Furthermore, the human form is constructed in such a mystical fashion that the threads of all creation are woven together to make man. No other form in the creation is as complete. This is by the Lord’s own design, and it is because of this that man is held to be the noblest of all forms of creation *(ashraf al-makhlūqāt).* For it is only through this form, designed in this way and for this purpose, that God can be realized.

The threads of energy which comprise the creation – spun out, in ever increasing complexity, as the creative Power of God emanates ‘further and further’ from the Source – are finally drawn back together again at the nether pole of the creation into one energy complex: man. In man, there lies a point of resonance to every part of the creation, inner or outer. Man can thus look within himself and know the essence of all creation because, within himself, he has a point of contact to its every part. Only he can know God and His creation in their entirety.

Rūmī refers to the microcosm as the variant, *‘ālam-i aṣghar,* and to the macrocosm as *‘ālam-i kabīr* (the great world) and its variants *‘ālam-i akbar* and *‘ālam-i kubrá.* Characteristically putting things contrariwise, he says that man may appear to be the microcosm to the outer eye of the intellectual “philosopher” but, to the mystic, man has always been the macrocosm. Indeed, he says, the “branch” or the “tree” (the macrocosm) which bears the “fruit” (man, the microcosm) was only planted by the “gardener” (God) so that the “fruit” could come into existence:

> Explaining that while philosophers say that man is the microcosm *(‘ālam-i ṣaghīr),* the spiritually minded say that man is the macrocosm *(‘ālam-i kabīr),* the reason being that philosophy is confined to

the phenomenal form of man, whereas spirituality is connected with the essential truth of his true nature.

> Therefore in form you are the microcosm *('ālam-i aṣghar),*
> therefore in reality you are the macrocosm *('ālam-i akbar).*
> Externally, the branch is the origin of the fruit;
> Essentially, the branch came into existence
> for the sake of the fruit.
> If there had been no desire and hope for the fruit,
> why should the gardener have planted the root of the tree?
> Therefore in reality the tree was born of the fruit,
> even if in appearance it (the fruit) was generated by the tree.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:521 (heading), 521–24; cf. MJR4 p.301*

Man does not see this, he says, because of his various worldly "preoccupations":

> Man is a mighty volume; within him all things are written, but veils and darknesses do not allow him to read that knowledge within himself. The veils and darknesses are the various preoccupations and diverse worldly plans and desires of every kind.
> *Rūmī, Fīhi mā Fīhi 11:1–3, KFF p.50, in DRA pp.61–62*

Only in the Perfect Man *(al-Insān al-Kāmil)* has man's true estate been consciously realized: that the entire creation with its multitudes of worlds lies latent within everyone:

> Every Prophet came alone into this world: he was alone,
> and he had a hundred unseen worlds within him.
> By his power he enchanted the macrocosm *('ālam-i kubrá),*
> he enfolded himself in a very small frame.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2505–6, MJR2 p.136*

See also: **al-'ālam al-kabīr**.

'ālam-i ḥayavānī (P) *Lit.* domain *('ālam)* of animals *(ḥayavānī);* the realm of animal life, the animal kingdom. The difference between human beings and animals lies in the human ability to experience the spiritual Reality within, to rise higher than the angels. 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī describes humankind as divided into three "castes" or tiers.

The lowest tier, which includes the majority of human beings, belongs to the "animal man/woman" who has the form of a human being but, being unable to fathom the *ma'ná* (spirit, meaning) of divine revelation, inhabits the *'ālam-i ḥayavānī.*

The second tier belongs to the "spiritual men/women", the "chosen elect of God". They are endowed with *gnosis,* "that priceless and precious pearl of their humanity", but they are still struggling at an "intermediate station" on the path, sometimes eager, sometimes "lukewarm".

The third tier belongs to the few who have realized the kernel *(lubb).* "Of this saintly company, people comprehend no further portion than a likeness *(tashbīh)* and an analogy *(tamthīl).*"[1]

See also: **al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī.**

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[1] Leonard Lewisohn, quoting *Tamhīdāt,* 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, *TQH* pp.41–42, in *HSC* pp.318–20.

ālayavijñāna (S) *Lit.* abode *(ālaya)* of consciousness *(vijñāna);* the central consciousness; the store of consciousness; the persistent and underlying consciousness which continues in existence through all changes in individual consciousness; hence, that which is subject to successive births and deaths; a term introduced by the *Yogāchāra* school of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. The doctrine of *ālayavijñāna* was systematized in the fourth or fifth century CE by Asanga and Vasubandhu.

According to the *Yogāchāra* school, phenomena are simply 'representations' or images appearing in consciousness *(vijñāna).* These images are produced by consciousness itself; there is held to be no external object independent of consciousness. All objective things, including human beings, are thus modifications of consciousness *(vijñāna pariṇāma).* The consciousness that undergoes modifications consists of three layers:

1. Six forms or modifications of consciousness arising from the mind and the five senses.
2. The I-consciousness (*manas,* mind) which accompanies these six.
3. The central store of consciousness *(ālayavijñāna),* in which the impressions *(vāsanā)* of past experiences are accumulated as 'seeds' for future experiences.

While the central consciousness *(ālayavijñāna)* is hidden, the first two are manifest, and are therefore called 'consciousness-in-activity *(pravṛitti vijñāna)*'. The central consciousness and consciousness-in-activity are dependent on each other. Consciousness-in-activity arises from the seed preserved in the central consciousness, and leaves, in turn, its impression in the central consciousness.

Consciousness-in-activity and the central consciousness form a continuous stream of consciousness that flows on until all the impressions contained within it are erased. A human being is therefore a stream of consciousness, and things that appear to exist in the world are only images appearing in this stream of consciousness. The consciousness that arises in each moment is thus of a dependent nature because its origination is dependent on the impression of past experiences preserved in the *ālayavijñāna.* Man mistakes the image for a real object, and names it. The object thus superimposed upon the image is hence of an imagined nature. When the false imagination is removed through the practice of *yoga,* man becomes aware of the absence of the superimposed object, and realizes his perfected nature.

Through the practice of *yoga,* the practitioner travels the path of insight *(darshana-mārga),* and becomes aware of the ultimate Reality. There then arises in him the force to destroy those seeds that have accumulated from beginningless time in the *ālayavijñāna.* Ultimately, these seeds are destroyed, and the stream of consciousness no longer constitutes the basis of his existence. In its place, the ultimate, undifferentiated Reality reveals itself as the true basis of all living beings. Through this transformation, the practitioner attains Buddhahood.

amānah (A), **amānat** (P) *Lit.* trust; specifically, the "trust" that was laid upon man alone out of all the creation, according to the *Qur'ān:*

> Lo! We offered the trust *(amānah)*
> unto the heavens and the earth and the hills,
> but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it;
> And man assumed it.
> Lo! He hath proved a tyrant and a fool.
>
> *Qur'ān 33:72, MGK*

The nature of this trust has been variously interpreted. In common Muslim usage, the *amānah* is understood to mean the faith of Islam and obedience to the religious law. Sometimes, it is taken to mean the gift of free will bestowed on man. Among Sufis, the *amānah* is the unique responsibility and privilege entailed in being human, the opportunity to experience *gnosis* (*ma'rifah,* mystic knowledge) through mystic ascent *(mi'rāj-i qalb).* It is thus man's power or apparent freedom to seek his own spiritual betterment. Again, the potential to learn to love God completely and to attain oneness with Him is regarded as the trust laid upon man – a trust that no other form in the creation can fulfil. Ordinary man is to become the Perfect Man *(al-Insān al-Kāmil)* in whom God contemplates His own perfection. If he fails to reach the perfection of the Perfect Man, he will have failed to honour the trust.

This trust is also referred to as man's becoming the *khalīfah* (vicegerent) of *Allāh* and as 'the great attainment *(al-fawz al-'aẓīm)*'. But this great attainment, from which all other forms shrank in trepidation, is attained only by travelling a path of pain or anguish. Rūmī says that just as the "pains of childbirth" are essential for the child to be born, so too will God's "trust" be fulfilled only from the pain of "looking within":

> Pain will arise from such looking within,
>   and the pain will bring him out
>   from the veil (of self-conceit).
> Until mothers are overtaken
>   by the pains of childbirth,
>   the child finds no way to be born.
> This trust *(amānat)* is in the heart *(dil)*,
>   and the heart is pregnant with it:
> These counsels (of the Saints) are like the midwife.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:2517–19; cf. MJR2 p.351*

The seeker's pain is twofold: it is the pain of recognizing his own human imperfection, together with the blissful pain of love and divine longing, the awareness of separation from the divine Beloved within.

See also: **alast** (▸2).

amar(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* without *(a)* death *(mara);* not subject to death; deathless, immortal; an inherent quality of the Lord, the eternal realm, the creative Power and the soul. Nāmdev says that the soul derives its immortality from God:

> Prays Nāmdev, whatsoever this soul craves for, that it attains:
> Whosoever ever abides in the casteless Lord,
>   he becomes immortal *(amar)*.
>
> *Nāmdev, Ādi Granth 1351, MMS*

This immortality, however, is of the soul, not the body. Hence, Malūkdās writes:

> Creation and dissolution go on constantly:
>   in this world no one is immortal *(amar)*.
>
> *Malūkdās, Bānī, Chetāvnī 4:2, MDB p.11*

Sahajobāī says that it can be acquired by contact with the divine Name:

> My medicine is the Lord's Name *(Nām)*....
> Whoever takes it, becomes immortal *(amar)*,
> and does not return to this ocean of existence.
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Rāg Sārang 1:1–2, SBB pp.58–59*

In Persian, Arabic and Urdu, the entirely unconnected word, *amr*, means command, principle, law or rule. Adopted into Punjabi as *Amar*, this term has also been used in the *Ādi Granth* for the Command or Word of God as His Law.

See also: **ajar**, **al-Amr** (3.1).

anāhat(a) chakra (S/H), **anāhad chakra** (H), **anāhad chakkar** (Pu) *Lit. chakra* of the unstruck *(anāhata)* (Music); used by yogis for the heart *chakra*. There are many copies or imitations of the higher realms in the lower regions, and names used for higher realms are frequently used for lower regions or centres as well. This is one such instance. The heart centre may be termed the *anāhata chakra*, but there is no real *anāhata Shabda* (unstruck Sound) there. True *Shabd* begins from above the eye centre.

See also: **hṛidaya chakra**.

ānandamaya-kosha (S) *Lit.* sheath or covering *(kosha)* filled with or made up of *(maya)* bliss *(ānand)*; the fifth of the five *koshas* or coverings of the soul according to the *Upanishads*, corresponding to the astral body.

See **kosha**.

ānand(a) rūp(a) (S/H/Pu), **anand rūp**, **anad rūp** (Pu) *Lit.* form *(rūp)* of bliss *(ānand)*; the embodiment of bliss; bliss incarnate; descriptive of the soul in mystic ecstasy:

> Immaculate is the light of the Lord's Nectar Name *(Amrit Hari Nām)*:
> partaking of it, one becomes immortal and desireless.
> The body and soul become cool, and the fire is quenched:
> Such persons are the embodiment of bliss *(anad rūp)*,
> and are renowned in the world.
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 886–87, MMS*

A Master himself is also described as *ānand rūp*. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh says:

> He is *Shabd rūp* (embodiment of *Shabd*) … *prem rūp* (embodiment of love), *ānand rūp* (embodiment of bliss), *harsh rūp* (embodiment of happiness), and still he is *arūp* (without any form).
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 2:261, SB p.139*

aṇḍī man (H) *Lit.* mind *(man)* of *aṇḍa;* the astral mind; the mind which functions in the astral region; also called the *sūkshma man* (subtle mind). Though the mind is one, and is responsible for the creation of all forms within the physical, astral and causal spheres, the coverings of the soul in these realms can be regarded as three bodies with three corresponding individual minds – as one mind functioning at different levels. Just as the soul is a drop of the ocean of the Supreme Being or supreme Soul, so too is the individual mind – at whatever level – a drop of the universal mind. Mahārāj Sāwan Singh briefly describes the nature of these three minds in a letter to a disciple:

> There are three minds, and corresponding to these three minds are three kinds of forms:
>
> **1**. In *trikuṭī,* the *nij man* (the *kāraṇ man,* the innermost or causal mind) or *Brahm* or the universal mind covers the spirit. The forms here are made of very pure *māyā,* so much so that a majority of the seekers have failed to see here the spirit apart from *māyā* or mind, and therefore consider *Brahm* as all-pervading, etc.
>
> **2**. Lower down, in *sahans dal kanwal,* the forms of *trikuṭī* get another covering of mind and form, both coarser than the above, the astral form here being governed by the *aṇḍī man* (*sūkshma* or astral mind). In this zone, there are the hells and heavens and numerous other *lokas* (regions). Here, the tendencies of the mind are directed inward and are elevating. This mind behaves like a wise enemy (seeking to keep us here).
>
> **3**. Further down, in *piṇḍa* (the region below the eyes), the astral form gets another covering of coarse material, with which we are familiar. The mind that governs this form is called the *piṇḍī man* (physical or lower mind, *antaḥkaraṇa*). Its tendencies are outward and diffusive, and it is most difficult to control.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 20, SG p.27*

Although the three kinds of bodies with their corresponding minds are the three main coverings, they do not exhaust all the coverings of the soul. The other coverings include the more universally present aspects of the mind, pervading and influencing all minds and bodies at all levels of subtlety and grossness, these being *māyā* (illusion), the three *guṇas* (attributes), the twenty-five *prakṛitis* (natures) and the five *tattvas* (elemental states of matter).

See also: **aṇḍa** (4.1), **antaḥkaraṇa**, **kāraṇ man**, **nij man**.

angüery (G) A spirit of death; a Guaraní term for the form taken by the animal soul after death.

See **asynguá**.

annamaya-kosha (S) *Lit.* sheath or covering *(kosha)* filled with or made up of *(maya)* food *(anna);* the gross physical body; the first of the five *koshas,* covering the *ātman* or soul, according to the *Upanishads.*

See **kosha**.

annamaya-purusha (S) *Lit.* being *(purush)* filled with *(maya)* food *(anna);* a physically conscious being; a materially incarnate soul.

antaḥkaraṇ(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* inner *(antah)* instrument *(karaṇ);* the inner organ or instrument of the mind; hence, the seat of thought and feeling; the mind, the heart, the conscience; also called the *antarindriya* (inner sense organ); the human or physical facets of the mind, consisting of four primary aspects or functions, also denoted as the petals of a lotus; the four-petalled lotus or energy complex lying in the 'sky' of the body at the base of the set of six centres in *aṇḍa;* the human organ of thought and mental function, made up of subtle fields of energy above the six *chakras* of the physical form.

The human mind is constituted of a four-petalled lotus or *chakra,* known as the *antaḥkaraṇa,* situated above the sixth or *ājñā chakra* of the physical body, the 'petals' of a *chakra* denoting its energy aspects or energetic functions. Its four aspects are known as *buddhi, manas, chitta* and *ahankāra.* Following the descriptions of *Advaita Vedānta,* the *Vedāntasāra* summarizes their individual functions:

> Intellect *(buddhi)* is that function *(vṛitti)* of the *antaḥkaraṇa*
> which discriminates.
> The mind *(manas)* is that function of the *antaḥkaraṇa*
> which considers the pros and cons of something....
> Memory *(chitta)* is that function of the *antaḥkaraṇa*
> which remembers.
> Ego *(ahankāra)* is that function of the *antaḥkaraṇa*
> which is characterized by self-consciousness.
>
> *Sadānanda, Vedāntasāra 2:65–66, 68–69; cf. VSY pp.46–47*

Buddhi is the faculty of discrimination, of impersonal consciousness possessed by the *jīva* (incarnate soul). It can be considered as the faculty of pure rationality untainted by any hint of selfish considerations. It makes decisions based upon the impressions gained from the *manas* and *chitta,* mind stuff and memory. But while *buddhi* is the discriminatory faculty, being impersonal, it has in itself no power to self-oriented action. *Buddhi* is the detached logic and the mental appreciation or vision of things which lies behind intellectual functioning. It is rationality, though infused with understanding of morality and the higher qualities of life, according to the degree of consciousness of the individual and his contact with the higher or inner energies and realms of his own being.

Being impersonal, *buddhi* requires a degree of personalization for it to find expression in an individual human being. This is provided by the faculty of *ahankāra* or personal awareness. It is *ahankāra* which identifies with the perceptions of the senses and determines the subsequent responses. *Buddhi* and *ahankāra* together thus comprise the 'experiencer'.

Manas is mind stuff. It is the energy or 'substance' which registers impressions from the senses *(indriyas).* Its reactions are instantaneous according to its ingrained habits or grooves from previous experience. It automatically likes or dislikes the experiences of life according to its own past impressions and tendencies.

The *indriyas,* or senses themselves, are closely associated with the faculties of the *manas* aspect of the mind as it looks outward and interacts with the five *tattvas.* They are the mental means by which the inner consciousness of the individual is aware of outer material vibrations or energy patterns. The *indriyas,* however, are not only the physical sense organs themselves, but also the mental faculties or counterparts, whereby the experiencer is conscious of the objects of sensation.

The *indriyas* are ten in number, containing both the receptive, input organs of perception or sensation – that is the ear (hearing), skin (touch, feeling), eye (sight), tongue (taste) and nose (smell) – and the five organs of action activated by the mind in response to sensory input. These are the motor and outgoing impulses of the mind, ultimately translated into efferent nerve impulses in the motor nervous system, together with other biological activity. The five motor *indriyas* are the mouth, hands, legs, anus and genitalia, through which speech, manipulation, mobility, elimination/excretion and the procreative functions are performed, and by means of which the mind's desires and tendencies are outwardly expressed in physical action.

It is also through these mental counterparts to the senses and motor activities that imagination of physical action and sensation can take place. It is in them that desire or aversion for particular activities and sensations can be entertained, and through them that dreams of the world are experienced. The *indriyas* are the mental faculties, operating through the sense or motor organs, as well as the sense or motor organs themselves. It is therefore possible for a spiritually evolved individual to perceive the material world without the aid of the physical sense organs themselves, but only through their mind.

Regarding the *indriyas* as the subtle counterpart to the physical organs, Swāmī Nikhilānanda observes:

> By an organ *(indriya)* is meant not the outer instrument, but something subtle, made of finer matter, which functions through the physical instrument. Thus, the organ of seeing does not mean the outer eyes, but an organ made of intangible, finer matter, which is one of the constituents of the subtle body *(sūkshma sharīra).*
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS p.70*

The *indriyas* are an integral part of the operation of *manas.* A human being is persistently bombarded by sensory input, most of which is ignored, for sanity could hardly be maintained if an individual were continually and specifically conscious of all the sensations pouring in. A person must, therefore, first apply his attention to any sense perception before he can become aware or conscious of whatever is presented to it. This attribute of attention is the function of *manas,* being the energy 'substrate' in which sense impressions are registered. Unless the receiving energy of *manas* is aligned to the *indriya,* the sensory input is not registered.

It is the function of *manas* to make instinctive selection of sensory input, according to its likes and dislikes. Additionally, *manas* also synthesizes the input from the various sense organs such that an individual feels that his various sense perceptions are integrated with regard to an object or scene. That is, the input from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin are all integrated and merged into one complete perception of things.

Manas thus receives sensory impressions from the outside, through the *indriyas.* But it is itself quite automatic in its functioning, and requires the existence of *buddhi* and *ahankāra* to give it 'life', and for its activities to registered and experienced. *Buddhi* surveys the impressions gained by *manas* and makes intelligent selection and decisions thereon, while *ahankāra* becomes the executive, personal faculty when any action is to be taken, passing its decision back through *manas* and the five motor *indriyas* (if appropriate), for the decision to be executed. *Ahankāra,* in relation to the other aspects of the human mind, is thus the primary source of personal motivation.

In all but evolved souls, these mental faculties act in an uncontrolled manner under the influence, primarily, of *ahankāra.* Through *ahankāra,* an individual comes to identify with both the sensory impressions of the outside world, and his own reactions to them. *Ahankāra* thus becomes the personal sense of human ego, with the result that the individual considers that certain objects, people or ideas belong to him, despite the fact that the attribute of belonging, in any true or permanent sense, is clearly impossible.

Ahankāra, however, is a necessary faculty of a balanced and controlled human mind. Individuation is the nature of human existence, but it should, ideally, be within the conscious understanding and control of the individual.

Ahankāra, then, identifies with the sensory, desiring and enjoyment aspects of *manas.* In most instances, this process takes place with such rapidity that *buddhi,* the discriminating and rational faculty, hardly has any time to function. Without *buddhi* and *ahankāra,* the activities of *manas* and its associated *indriyas* are inert, but the desire for personal self-gratification is so strong that the *buddhi* is frequently ignored or by-passed, and the *ahankāra* takes almost complete control. Hence the sayings, "Think before you act," and "Look before you leap," both implying the exercise of *buddhi* before action.

The last faculty of the fourfold human mind to consider is *chitta.* While *manas* is the immediate and present faculty of cognition and perception, *chitta* is memory. Like *manas,* it also is often described as 'mind stuff'. It is the storehouse of all the impressions gained by *manas.* Psychologists talk of short-term and long-term memory. If *manas* is associated with the functioning of short-term memory, then *chitta* is the energy 'substrate' in which long-term impressions are lodged. Thus, *ahankāra* and *buddhi* draw automatically on this reservoir of experience when making their decisions and actions.

An example may be of help in understanding the integrated functioning of these four faculties. Suppose a person is physically threatened by another. The impressions come in through his eyes and other senses. These are received through the sensory *indriyas* into *manas.* Drawing on *chitta* (memory), *manas* may have an instinctive dislike of the person, due to past experiences with him. The sensory input together with the automatic, almost instinctive reaction of *manas,* are then assessed by *buddhi. Buddhi* weighs up the possible outcome of a violent encounter. If the one doing the threatening is big and strong, the *buddhi* may decide against action, despite the provocation. If *buddhi,* drawing upon *chitta,* specifically remembers a previous adverse encounter, then it will find reasons, justifications and words to avoid conflict. *Ahankāra* here comes into action as the executor of the mind's decisions –

in this case to argue its way out of a fight. If the *buddhi* – through *chitta* – recalls that previous encounters came off in its favour, then *ahankāra* may be called upon to initiate a fight. In this way, all four functions of the mind are automatically involved.

The example is simplistic, since a great many factors go into the making and execution of a decision. But in all cases, *chitta, manas, buddhi* and *ahankāra* are involved. For the majority of the sensory impressions received, *manas* receives the input and, by reference to *chitta,* never involves the use of *buddhi* in any decision-making process. Even if the *buddhi* is involved, the decision may be taken – usually quite automatically and almost unconsciously – to take no action. *Ahankāra* is therefore not directly involved. In practice, however, the four faculties are so closely interwoven that they make one functioning whole that may be called the human mind. Individual minds, including their perception and understanding, vary because of the differences between individual *antaḥkaraṇas.*

Since *chitta* is memory, it is within the *antaḥkaraṇa* that the impressions of a lifetime are etched. It is like the black box flight recorder of an aeroplane which takes account of everything that happens. Every action and thought leaves its indelible impression, some being deeper than others. From these are woven the future destiny and character of the individual while many other impressions remain etched still more deeply in the mind as the stored or *sañchita karma.* The *antaḥkaraṇa* is therefore the 'place' where the destiny or *prārabdha karma* is stored, awaiting its outworking – through the mind – during the course of life. It is for this reason that although the *ahankāra* considers itself the doer, this is actually an illusion. All the inner promptings of the *ahankāra,* giving rise to actions and events, are destined or predetermined according to grooves, patterns, tendencies or impressions within the mind. The *ahankāra,* which considers itself to be free, is completely conditioned by the already pre-existing content of the mind of which it is a part.

Descriptions of the *antaḥkaraṇa* vary among the different schools of Indian philosophy, and the account given here is largely that of *Advaita Vedānta.* Some tantric descriptions of the *antaḥkaraṇa* describe the functions of *chitta* and *manas* as more interfused, ascribing the faculty of sight, for example, to *chitta.* Other schools attribute to the *buddhi* the faculties here ascribed to *chitta.* In the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali and in the *Sānkhya* school, the mind as a whole is known as the *chitta,* and in this instance it is more appropriately regarded as synonymous with the *antaḥkaraṇa* itself, its three aspects being *buddhi, manas* and *ahankāra.* In both these systems, although the *buddhi* appears to possess intelligence, it is actually borrowed or derived from the *purusha* – the observer, the true being of man. A human being will remain in ignorance and misery as long as the *purusha* falsely identifies with the unconscious aspects of his being – the *buddhi, manas* and *ahankāra* (which are understood as the products of *prakṛiti,* the primal blueprint of nature).

In other schools of thought, it is *manas* that is accorded the wider definition. In the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad, manas* is used to mean all the mental functions together. Thus, after mentioning several faculties and tendencies of the mind, both positive and negative, the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* says:

> All these are *manas* only.
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 1:5.3*

The mind consists of real though subtle energies, and the faculties described here exist as real 'entities', so to speak. They are interwoven and integrated with each other at a vibrational level separate from and higher than that of the physical matter of which gross bodies and the objects of the physical plane *(piṇḍa)* consist. However, their real nature, like all inner realities, is beyond the wit of words to define and portray in anything but the broadest outline.

See also: **aṇḍa** (4.1), **ahankāra** (▸2), **indriya**, **karma** (6.3).

antargat(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* residing *(gat)* within *(antar);* lying within; inside, within, hidden; concealed; hence, inner state; inner feelings. Mystics have repeatedly said that everything – God and His entire creation – lies within the human form, and it is there that He is to be sought:

> Who is near, and who can be said as distant from Him? –
> all by Himself, He is fully pervading everywhere.
> Nānak, God causes that man to understand Him,
> whom He instructs that He Himself is within *(antargat)* him.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 294, MMS*

> Within *(antargat)* me, I have met with my God and am emancipated:
> my mind now wanders not anywhere.
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 1103, MMS*

> (Whoever) heartily hears, believes and loves (God's Name,
> obtains) salvation by thoroughly bathing
> in the shrine within *(antargat)* himself.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 4, MMS*

antarindriya (S/H) *Lit.* internal *(antar)* organ *(indriya);* an alternative name for the *antaḥkaraṇa.*

See **antaḥkaraṇa**.

apān(a) (S/H) *Lit.* lower *(apa)* + breath *(ana);* the downward breath; one of the aspects or currents of *prāṇa* (subtle life energy) which administer the five *tattvas* (elemental states of matter) in body function. *Apāna* "goes downward (from the navel centre), and is located in the organs of excretion".[1] It organizes and administers the bodily activities associated with the earthy *tattva.* This includes elimination, excretion and many other bodily functions, both gross and subtle.

See also: **mūlādhāra chakra, prāṇa, tattva.**

1. Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāra* 2:79.

'aql (A/P) (pl. A/P. *'uqūl,* P. *'aql'hā*) *Lit.* reason, intelligence, intellect, wisdom, discrimination, conscience; that which distinguishes man from the animals – his discriminating intelligence, his foresight, his potential wisdom and his capacity to understand the divine; the higher part of man, as distinguished from the *nafs* (carnal soul, ego) which embodies his lower tendencies; in its highest manifestation, that part of man which has an inward and upward tendency, leading towards spirituality.

Muslim philosophers, following Aristotelian thought, equated the *'aql* with the Greek *nous,* and the *nafs* with the Greek *psychē* (soul). Usually translated as intellect or reason, *nous* often refers to that part of man which leads him to the Divine. In this context, the *psychē* or soul refers to his lower aspects, his "lower mental functions", the *nafs:*

> The philosophers of Islam followed, in their accounts of *'aql,* Aristotle and his Greek commentators, more especially Alexander of Aphrodisias. According to them, *'aql* is that part of the soul by which it 'thinks' or 'knows' and as such is the antithesis of perception. Mostly, however, *'aql* is not regarded as a part of the soul at all – which is then restricted to the lower mental functions – but as an incorporeal and incorruptible substance differing in kind from the soul – an ambiguity which also pervades Aristotle's psychology.
>
> *"'akl", in Encyclopaedia of Islam, EI1 p.342*

Such discussions highlight the way in which essential terms may change their meaning over time, or from context to context, or between one writer and another. This can readily cause confusion, especially in translations.

In Sufi discussions, the *'aql* is a subtle, incorporeal substance or essence residing within man. It is an inner intuition that distinguishes truth from untruth. Anṣārī says:

> Our *'aql* holds the heart captive, preventing it from loving anything other than God, dissuading it from vain desires.
>
> *Anṣārī, in Kashf al-Asrār, KA1 p.443, in FLI p.586*

Rūmī says that the *'aql* should ride and guide the *nafs* as a man rides an ass.[1] In most people, however, the *nafs* controls the *'aql*, and the early stages of spiritual progress consist of the *'aql*'s wresting control from the *nafs* and training it.

In Sufi thought, human *'aql* or intelligence is derived from the divine Intelligence. It derives its power from *al-'Aql al-Awwal* (the Primal Intelligence) or *'al-Aql al-Kullī* (the Universal Intelligence). The limited *'aql*, functioning within the individual, is hence called the partial *'aql (al-'aql al-juz'ī)*. The whole, of which it is a part, is *al-'Aql al-Kullī*. God is the supreme Intelligence in all things; man's *'aql* or intelligence is a partial reflection of it.

Sufis also explain that *'aql*, "great" and "noble" as it is, is inferior to the spirit or soul *(rūḥ* or *jān)*:

> Although *'aql* is great and most noble among creatures, yet it ranks lower than soul. Soul *(rūḥ)* is from the world of Command (a particle of God's Essence); wisdom *('aql)* is a created form, though superior in the created world.
>
> *'Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd Qāshānī, Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah wa-Miftāḥ al-Kifāyah.*
> *MHK p.102, in FN19 p.59*

'Aql, when it properly guides the *nafs*, can lead towards devotion and service, but it cannot lead to God:

> *'Aql* is the guide to devotion and servitude through which a devotee is led to the reality of patience and forbearance. If one seeks to reach God through *'aql*, *'aql* becomes his god, in the place of God Almighty.
>
> *Bābā Ṭāhir Hamadānī, in SKQ p.377, in FN19 p.60*

Hence, Rūmī speaks of the difference between the seeking of the intellect *('aql)* and the seeking of the spirit *(jān)*, a theme to which he repeatedly returns:

> The intellectual quest *(baḥś-i 'aqlī)*,
>   though it be as fine as pearls and coral,
>   is other than the spiritual quest *(baḥś-i jān)*.
> The spiritual quest *(baḥś-i jān)* is on another plane:
>   the spiritual wine *(bādah-'i jān)* has another consistency....

Know that the quest of the intellect *(baḥś-i 'aql)* and the senses
is concerned with effects or secondary causes.
The spiritual quest *(baḥś-i jānī)* is either wonder
or the father of wonder.

The illumination of the spirit *(jān)* comes:
there remains not, O you who seek illumination,
conclusion and premise, or that which contradicts,
or that which renders its acceptance necessary,
Because the seer on whom His light is dawning
is quite independent of the logical proof
which resembles a blind man's staff.

Rūmī, Maśnavī 1:1501–8; cf. MJR2 p.83

Similarly, Ḥāfiẓ says even more pointedly:

O you who try to learn of love from reason's *('aql)* book!
I fear, by such investigation,
you will never grasp its subtlety.

Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.37, DHM (81:7) p.104, DIH p.91; cf. DHWC (66:6) p.161

Other Sufis have said the same:

Abū al-Ḥasan Nūrī, a famous *Ṣūfī* mystic, was asked, "What is the way to God?" He answered, "God." He was then asked, "So what is *'aql?*" He replied, "*'Aql* is incapacity, and the incapacitated cannot show the way except to one like himself."

'Aṭṭār, Tadhkirat al-Awliyā' 2, TAN2 p.54, TAI p.473

Since I had no one else,
I chose the *'aql* (intellect) as my travelling companion.
But in the space of just one alley,
my skirt was torn to pieces by the thorns of his reasoning.

Ṣā'ib Tabrīzī, Dīvān, in FNI9 p.60

In such instances, *'aql* clearly refers to man's intellect or reasoning processes. Enlarging on the same theme, Rūmī also says that when a seeker sets out on the mystic path, *'aql* is not just inadequate as a guide to God, it actually drives, controls and actively misleads the seeker:

Your intellect *('aql)* is like the camel driver,
and you are the camel:

It drives you in every direction under its bitter control.
The Saints are the Intelligence of intelligence *('Aql-i 'aql)*,
  and intellects *('aql'hā)*, to the end, are like camels.

Come now, look upon them (the Saints) with respect:
There is but one guide,
  and a hundred thousand souls *(jān-i ṣad-hazār)* (following him).
What is the guide and what the camel driver?
Get an eye that can behold the Sun!

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2497–500; cf. MJR2 p.136

Rūmī also asserts the superiority of the spirit *(jān* or *rūḥ)* over human intelligence or intellect *('aql):*

The intellect *('aql)* is furnished with apprehension
  and enlightenment by the spirit *(jān):*
How should the spirit *(rūḥ)* become subject to its supervision?
But the spirit *(jān)* makes an impression on the intellect *('aql)*,
  and in consequence of that impression
  the intellect *('aql)* exercises a certain governance.

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:3584–85; cf. MJR4 p.201

He says that the spirit is like a king, intelligence and intellect like his vizier. A wise king lets his vizier do his job and counsel him, but the king is of a higher rank and must be in control of the vizier. A kingdom where the vizier has wrested power from the king is in trouble! In fact, he goes on to say that the king (the spirit) should make not the limited, individual intellect his vizier; he should make *'Aql-i Kull* (Universal Intelligence) his vizier:

The king is as the spirit *(jān)*
  and the vizier as the intellect *('aql):*
The corrupt intellect *('aql- fāsid)*
  causes the spirit *(rūḥ)* to move downward.
When the angelical intellect *(farishtah-'i 'aql)*
  became a *Hārūt* (an angel who was imprisoned in a pit),
  it became a teacher in magic to two hundred devils.
Do not take the individual intellect *('aql-i juzvī)*
  as your vizier:
Make the Universal Intelligence *('Aql-i Kull)* your vizier, O king.
Do not make sensuality your vizier,
  else your pure spirit *(jān-i pāk)* will cease from prayer.
For this sensuality is full of greed,
  and sees only the immediate present,

> whereas the (higher) intelligence *('Aql)* takes thought
> for the Day of Judgment.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1256–60; cf. MJR4 pp.341–42*

'Aql is thus used in a variety of contexts, with a spread of meaning, and the subject can become complex. The Sufis, for instance, also described the spiritual progress and transformation of the individual in terms of how the *'aql* changes. In this description, there are twenty-two different forms of *'aql*. Sufis called the *'aql* that functions in everyday life the *'aql al-ma'āsh,* bodily intelligence or reason, *ma'āsh* meaning livelihood, subsistence or means of living. This is the intellect that processes available information and guides decisions, etc. It functions by analysing and dividing reality, the most fundamental division being that of subject and object.

The Sufis explained that when the mystic seeker rises above the physical level of the creation, the *'aql al-ma'āsh* gives way to the *'aql al-ma'ād,* the angelic or spiritual intelligence, *ma'ād* meaning the place to which one returns, the future life, and also the resurrection. This transcendental intelligence does not distinguish subject from object. In this sense, the *'aql* has sometimes been equated with the *rūḥ* (spirit).

Similarly, Sufis described the *'aql al-kasbī* (acquired intelligence) as giving way to the *'aql al-wahbī* (intelligence that comes as a gift from God). The limited, partial intelligence or wisdom of the individual *('aql al-juz'ī)* must give way to *al-'Aql al-Kullī* (the Universal Intelligence). And to begin this whole process of spiritual development, the *'aql* must become the *'aql al-īmān* (intelligence informed by faith), since a certain amount of faith is necessary to travel the spiritual path.

See also: **ātman, jān, nafs, rūḥ**.

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* II:1850–59.

'aql al-juz'ī, al- (A), **'aql-i juz'ī**, **'aql-i juzvī** (P) *Lit.* the partial *(juz'ī, juzvī)* intellect or intelligence *('aql);* individual or human intellect, individual intelligence. It is partial because it is a part or reflection of the Universal Intelligence *('Aql-i Kull).* It is also partial because it can only see reality skewed by the limited individual point of view. Rūmī points out the limitations of the *'aql-i juzvī:*

> Partial reason *('aql-i juzvī)* is a denier of love,
> though it may give out that it is a confidant.
> It is clever and knowing,
> but it is not naught (devoid of I-ness):

Until the angel has become naught,
he is an *Ahriman* (devil).
It *(ʻaql-i juzvī)* is our friend in word and deed:
But when you come to the case of inward perception,
it is useless.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1982–84; cf. MJR2 pp.107–8

This is why Sufis say that the *ʻaql* functioning within the individual is not a trustworthy helper on the mystic path. Swayed by individual likes and dislikes, imprisoned within the limited individual, it cannot see Reality. Rūmī says there is a great difference between the earthbound *ʻaql-i juzvī* and *ʻAql-i Kull* (Universal Intelligence):

Know well that intelligences *(ʻaql'hā)* differ in degree
from the earth to the sky.
There is an intelligence *(ʻaql)* like the orb of the sun;
There is an intelligence *(ʻaql)* inferior to Venus and the meteor.
There is an intelligence *(ʻaql)* like a flickering lamp;
There is an intelligence *(ʻaql)* like a spark of fire (in embers),
because, when the cloud is removed from it,
it produces intelligences that behold the light of God.
The individual intelligence *(ʻaql-i juzvī)*
has given (the Universal) Intelligence *(ʻAql)* a bad name:
Worldly desire has deprived the worldly man
of his spiritual desire.

Rūmī, Maśnavī V:459–63; cf. MJR6 p.30

Thus, the *ʻaql-i juzvī* clings to ego and limits itself. Rūmī speaks of many *ʻaql'hā* (plural of *ʻaql*) ranging "from the earth to the sky".

See also: **ābā' wa-ummahāt** (3.1), **ʻaql, al-ʻAql al-Awwal** (3.1), **al-ʻAql al-Kullī** (3.1).

ʻaql al-kasbī, al- (A), **ʻaql-i kasbī**, **ʻaql-i taḥṣīlī** (P) *Lit.* the acquired *(kasbī, taḥṣīlī)* intellect, intelligence, understanding *(ʻaql)*. Throughout Islamic literature the distinction is made between that which is acquired *(kasbī)*, meaning gained by personal effort, and that which is purely the result of divine grace. *ʻAql-i kasbī,* also called *ʻaql-i taḥṣīlī,* is contrasted with *ʻaql-i vahbī,* the intelligence that comes as a gift of God. Rūmī writes:

There are two kinds of intelligence *(ʻaql):*
the former is the acquired one *(i.e. ʻaql-i kasbī),*

which you learn, like a boy at school,
from books and teachers and from study,
and by memory, and from concepts,
and from excellent and new sciences.
Thus your intelligence becomes superior to others.

But by retaining all that, you are heavily burdened.
Occupied by wandering about in search of knowledge,
you have become a recording tablet....

The other intelligence *(i.e. 'aql-i vahbī)* is a gift from God:
its fountain is in the midst of the soul.
When the water of *gnosis* wells up in the breast,
it does not become stagnant or old or impure.
And if its way of exit be blocked, what harm?
For it gushes continually from within the house.

The acquired intelligence *('aql-i taḥṣīlī)* is like the conduits
that run into a house from the streets:
If the waterway is blocked, (the house) is without supply.
Seek the fountain from within yourself!

Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1960–68; cf. MJR4 pp.380–81, in SPL pp.35–36

See also: **'aql**.

'aql al-wahbī, al- (A), **'aql-i vahbī** (P) *Lit.* the given *(wahbī)* intelligence *('aql);* given understanding; that understanding which is God given, as opposed to that which is acquired through learning and study *(al-'aql al-kasbī);* hence, spiritual understanding, mystic knowledge, innate wisdom.

See also: **'aql, al-'aql al-kasbī**.

arba' 'anāṣir (A/P), **chahār 'anāṣir, chār 'unṣur** (P) *Lit.* four *(arba', chahār, chār)* elements *('anāṣir, 'unṣur):* earth (A. *habā'*, P. *khāk*), water (A. *mā'*, P. *āb*), fire (A. *nār*, P. *ātish*), and air (A. *hawā'*, P. *bād*); the basic constituents of the physical creation, according to Islamic thought; the four subtle essences or energies which underlie the manifestation of the material world, the physical elements or states of matter being the gross manifestations of these subtle essences. The domain of the four elements is said to be four spheres lying between the spiritual heavens and the material universe. They are thus intermediate between spirit and matter.

The principle of the four elements and the four natures *(chahār ṭab')* forms part of the basis of traditional Islamic medicine. Each of these elements also contains two of the four natures of hotness, coldness, dryness and wetness. Thus, air contains hotness and wetness, fire – hotness and dryness, earth – coldness and dryness, and water – wetness and coldness. It is interaction between the elements and the natures which produces the variety and constant change which characterize the physical universe:

> Fire is dry and hot, air – hot and moist, water – moist and cold, earth – cold and dry. The elements are continually passing into one another through the medium of that quality they possess in common; thus fire can pass into air through the medium of heat, air into water through the medium of moisture, and so on. This process of transmutation of the simple elements, which is called "generation and corruption *(kawn-u fasād)*", is brought about by the influences of the seven planets, and results in the production of the three classes of compound bodies, namely, minerals, vegetables and animals.
>
> *R.A. Nicholson, Commentary on Maśnavī II:1625, MJR7 pp.298–99*

The Sufis described the physical creation as being made up of elements in a continual process of transmutation, of "generation and corruption (decay)", never at rest. All created beings in the material world are under the influence of these various forces, which create constant and unending change. The framework within which this universal principle is described depends upon the prevailing culture. In the case of Islam, the concept of the four elements was drawn from classical Greek philosophy.

The four elements are often described as four pillars supporting the material world. Some Sufis have also described the four elements as reflections or manifestations of the four primary divine attributes of Islamic thought. Thus, "'Afīf al-Dīn Tilimsānī, disciple of Ibn 'Arabī and companion of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, writes that the four fundamental divine attributes of Life, Knowledge, Will and Power are reflected as fire, air, water and earth respectively. In a similar way, al-Qūnawī's disciple, al-Farqānī, ascribes each of the qualities of the elements to a Name: Life – heat, Knowledge – cold, Will – wetness, Power – dryness.[1]"[2]

While Sufi and Muslim philosophers have generally described the world to be made up of four elements, Indian philosophy speaks of the five *tattvas* or elemental conditions of matter. The Indian Sufi, 'Ināyat Khān, resolves the difference by explaining that the *nūr* (ether, also light) is the "source and goal of all elements".[3] When *nūr* is added it makes five. He explains these elements in terms of vibrations:

> All planes of existence consist of vibrations, from the finest to the grossest kind; the vibrations of each plane have come from a higher one, and have become grosser. Whoever knows the mystery of vibrations, indeed knows all things. Vibrations are of five different aspects, appearing as the five elements: *nūr* – ether, *bād* – air, *ātish* – fire, *āb* – water, *khāk* – earth.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK5 p.26*

Regardless of how the elements and forces of nature are analysed, Rūmī points out that it is their nature to be in conflict with each other. Consequently, it is no surprise that human beings, being constituted of them, are also at war within themselves:

> When you consider it, this world is in continuous war,
> atom with atom, like faith against infidelity.
> One atom flies to the left, another to the right,
> one atom up, another down, seeking each other:
> In this tendency, behold a war manifest.
> This manifest war is the result of a hidden war:
> know that this discord springs from that....
>
> War in nature, war in deeds, war in words –
> there is a terrible war between all the parts.
> The world is maintained by means of this war:
> look at the elements *('anāṣir),*
> and you will understand it.
>
> The four elements *(chār 'unṣur)* are four sturdy pillars *(sutūn)*
> by which the roof of the present world is held in place.
> Yet each pillar is a destroyer of the other:
> the pillar of water is a destroyer of fire, and so on.
> Hence, the structure of creation
> is founded upon contraries *(aẓdād);*
> Consequently, all creatures have become warlike,
> to gain some benefit or to avoid injury.
>
> Likewise, my mental and bodily states are mutually opposed:
> each one is mutually opposite in its effect.
> Since I am incessantly waylaying myself,
> how can I act in harmony with others?
> Behold the surging armies of these states,
> each at war and strife with another.

> Observe this same grievous war in yourself:
> Why, then, are you engaged in warring with others? …
>
> Since the essence, the spirit, is beyond these oppositions *(faṣl'hā)*,
> its nature is not contrary like this;
> It is divine.…
> When the spirit sets its face towards the divine Beloved,
> it lays down its baggage and passes into life eternal.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:36–39, 46–54, 63, 128; cf. MJR6 pp.259–61, 264*

Mystics have always pointed to a Reality beyond the sphere of influence of the four elements. Hence, Rūmī also says that the existence of the elements is sustained from eternity: "The four elements *(chār 'unṣur)* in this world obtain a hundred supplies from the city beyond space."[4]

See also: **aḍdād** (5.2), **chahār ṭab'**, **tattva**, **al-ummahāt al-arba'ah**, **wŭ hsíng** (5.2).

1. Al-Farqānī, *Muntahā al-Madārik, MMF1* p.54.
2. W.C. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Love, SPL* p.354 (n.16).
3. 'Ināyat Khān, *Sufi Message, SMIK1* p.112.
4. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* III:3971, *MJR4* p.222.

arūp(a) chaitanya (S/H) *Lit.* formless *(arūp)* spirit *(chaitanya)* or consciousness; the soul. The essence of man and of all beings is soul, spirit or consciousness. The Lord is the ocean of soul, spirit, consciousness or being, lying as the essence or source of all created beings. Both God and the soul, being beyond all divisions, are formless.

See also: **chaitanya**, **chetana**, **chetanā**.

ashraf al-makhlūqāt (A) *Lit.* noblest *(ashraf)* of all created beings *(makhlūqāt)*; the roof and crown of all creation; the top of the creation. A common Muslim expression for the human form, considered the highest in creation; also called *aḥsan al-taqwīm* (the best of forms).

See also: **Ādam**, **aḥsan al-taqwīm**, **al-'ālam al-ṣaghīr**, **amānah**.

aṣl (A/P) (pl. *uṣūl*). *Lit.* root, origin, source; also, basis, essence, principle, as in the basic principles of a science. Sufis have pointed out that while man has a physical existence in the physical world, he has an *aṣl* – a root, origin or essence – that lies beyond the realm of time and space:

> You are in space *(makān),*
> but your origin *(aṣl)* is in the spaceless *(lā-makān):*
> Close your business here and open it there.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:612, MJR2 p.253*

It is the longing for its spiritual source *(aṣl)* that drives the soul to to seek divine union:

> Everyone who is left far from his source *(aṣl)*
> longs for the time when he was united with it.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:4; cf. MJR2 p.5*

In Islam, the fundamentals of religion *(uṣūl al-dīn)* include the two fundamentals of religious law *(uṣūl al-fiqh)* and the word, *i.e.* the *Qur'ān (uṣūl al-kalām).* However, mystics say that the seeker must look to his own fundamental or essential nature, rather than these relative "fundamentals":

> This, this, is the soul of all the sciences –
> that you should know who you are on the Day of Judgment.
> You are acquainted with the fundamentals *(uṣūl)* of the religion,
> but look upon your own fundamental *(aṣl),*
> and see whether it is good.
> Your own fundamentals *(uṣūl)* are better for you
> than the two fundamentals *(uṣūl)* (of Islam):
> So know your own fundamental *(aṣl),* O great man!
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:2654–56; cf. MJR4 p.149*

See also: **makān** (4.1).

āsmān (P) (pl. *āsmān'hā*) *Lit.* sky, firmament, heaven. As a Sufi technical term, *āsmān* means potentiality, possibility, accommodation. 'Ināyat Khān uses *āsmān* interchangeably with the Sanskrit word, *ākāsha,* describing it as a mould or potentiality. As he depicts it, the single, centred light of God radiates into the creation, dividing into the 'rays' which become the multitude of individual souls. An *āsmān* is the "mould" or "accommodation" which provides the various 'bodies' needed for specific manifestations of this light:

> This central light then divided existence into two forms, light and darkness.… This light and darkness formed an *ākāsha* or *āsmān,* an

> accommodation, a mould; and the phenomenon of light and shadow working though this mould furthered the manifestation into a great many accommodations, *āsmāns* or *ākāshas*, one within the other. Every step taken by the process of manifestation has resulted in a variety of forms made by the different substances which are produced during the process of spirit turning into matter … and it is the plane of the definite forms of nature which is called *āsmān* in Sufi terminology.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message; cf. SMIK1 pp.111–12*

'Ināyat Khān says that man is not actually disconnected from the subtle planes that ascend to the presence of God; he merely turns his back on them. The *āsmān* (mould or accommodation) of the physical form implants in man an appetite for the sustenance of the physical plane. The condition of the average man, he says,

> is like that of a captive imprisoned on the ground floor of the house: he has no access to the other floors of the building wherever he may wish to dwell. The secret of life is that every soul by its nature is an *āsmān* or *ākāsha*, an accommodation, and has in it an appetite; and of all that it partakes, it creates a cover which surrounds it as a shell, and the life of that shell becomes dependent upon the same substance of which it is made. Therefore, the shell becomes susceptible to all influences, and subject to the laws of that sphere from which it seeks its sustenance; or rather, the sustenance of the shell.
>
> The soul cannot see itself; it sees what is round it, it sees that in which it functions; and so it enjoys the comforts of the shell which is around it, and experiences the pains and discomforts which belong to the shell. And, in this way, it becomes an exile from the land of its birth, which is the Being of God, which is divine Spirit; and it seeks consciously or unconsciously once again the peace and happiness of home. God therefore is not the goal, but the abode of the soul, its real self, its true being.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK1 pp.140–41*

The *āsmān* of the physical form directs man's attention outward towards the physical world, banishing him from his divine home. However, 'Ināyat Khān points out that the soul took on an *āsmān* at every step in the descent from the single, centred light of God, and that each *āsmān* is connected with, or resonates with, every other *āsmān*. This, he says, is the secret of the power of *dhikr,* the repetition of sacred words, for a vibration initiated at a personal level resonates and reverberates, rising "higher than man can imagine, and wider than he can perceive":

> These centres are the *ākāshas* or domes where every sound has its echo, and the echo once produced in this *ākāsha* or *āsmān* reaches all other *āsmāns* which exist within and without. Therefore, the repetition of a sacred word has not only to do with oneself and one's life, but it spreads and rises higher than man can imagine, and wider than he can perceive. Verily, every action sets in movement every atom of the universe.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK1 p.152*

See also: **ākāsha**.

asthūl (Pu) *Lit.* gross, as in gross physical; a Punjabi variant of the Hindi and Sanskrit *sthūl(a).*

See **sthūla sharīra**.

astral body The soul's covering and means of expression in the astral realms; a subtle, self-luminous body formed of mental energies or material drawn from the astral realm; so-called because when seen, it appears to sparkle with millions of little particles resembling star dust. In some gnostic literature this covering is known as the body of fire because of its lustrous and sparkling character.[1]

See also: **body of air**, **regions** (4.1), **sūkshma sharīra**.

1. *Untitled Text* 256–57:16, *BC* pp.274–75.

asynguá (G) The animal or lower soul; a term used by the Paraguayan Avá-Chiripá and Apapokuvá Guaraní. In contrast to the divine soul *(ñe'eng),* man's earthly or base nature is embodied in an animal soul, the *asynguá,* which develops throughout a person's life. While the *ñe'eng* guides men to live a spiritually pure life, the *asynguá* tempts people to eat meat, commit adultery, and satisfy the lower passions. The Avá-Chiripá describe the *asynguá* as "a sort of monkey which we carry on our shoulders, and which we cannot see".[1] The Apapokuvá apparently believe that the divine soul creates an appetite for vegetables, while the animal creates an appetite for animal flesh.

According to the belief, while the *ñe'eng* can be reincarnated or return to its divine Creator after the death of the body, the *asynguá* can never have another birth. Rather, it becomes a spirit of death *(angüery),* which wanders in the forest and near the burial place of the body it inhabited. The Guaraní believe that the *angüery* tries to usurp the divine soul in a living person, and can cause disease, madness or death. A dying person is given much attention and is grieved over in an effort to prevent his *angüery* from holding a grudge. Elaborate rituals are performed by shamans to coerce the *angüery* to move away from the living or to leave them alone.

The idea of a lower soul that becomes a dangerous vengeful spirit after death is common in South American tribal religions. Often, the spirit is considered to transmigrate to an invisible animal that harms humans. Belief in a dual nature of man, a higher and lower 'soul', is consistent among the various Guaraní groups.

Bartolomé concludes that the *asynguá* is a sort of alter ego in animal form. From a mystical point of view, the Guaraní lower soul can be seen as a force that works to separate man from God, to keep man from knowing his true spiritual nature. Clearly, the *asynguá* is such a force, since it leads people to do things that hinder their spiritual development. It is the *asynguá* that causes a greater burden of imperfections *(tekó-achy)* that then keep an individual's higher soul from travelling to the land without evil *(ywy mará ey).*

Belief in a lower soul is found in mystical teachings associated with some major world religions. The Islamic Sufis speak of a higher or divine soul and a lower soul, which is the source of evil. Other mystical teachings speak of the ego or the lower mind as that which leads man away from God, towards gratification of the physical senses or animal appetites such as lust, greed and pride.

The *asynguá* is called the *tupichúa* by the Mbyá Guaraní and *ayvú-kué-poravé* by some Guaraní groups of southern Brazil.

See also: **ñe'eng**.

1. Anon., in *SAC* p.112.

ātish (P) *Lit.* fire; one of the essential elements comprising physical forms, according to Islamic philosophy. In this respect, Islamic thought followed the ancient Greeks.

See also: **arba' 'anāṣir**, **bād** (3.1), **agni**.

ātman (S), **ātmā** (S/H/Pu), **ātam** (Pu) *Lit.* self, soul, spirit; the real self; the true individual; the essence of life and sensibility; the innermost divine essence of man; the drop of being from the divine ocean of Being; also, the supreme Spirit or Oversoul. According to the *Upanishads,* the *ātman* is the true self in man, while the *Ātman* or *Paramātman* is the supreme Self:

That which is the subtle essence –
  in that all beings have their existence.
That is the Reality. That is the Self *(Ātman).*
O Shvetaketu, thou art That *(Tat tvam asi).*

Chhāndogya Upanishad 6:8.7

The *ātman* is the real *aham* (self or I), as opposed to *ahankāra* (the ego or false self); it is identical with *Brahman,* the absolute Being. The *ātman* is that aspect of *Brahman* which is incarnated, the individualization of the highest Being, the pure Consciousness who is without form and attributes.

The *ātman* when enveloped by a human body is called a *jīvātman* or *jīva.* The *ātman* uses the body as an instrument or vehicle, but knows that it is in reality the *ātman.* The *ātman* is therefore the *sākshī,* the inner witness of what the *jīvātman* undergoes, yet suffering all the same due to its connection with the mind and body, and being subject to *saṃsāra* (the cycle of birth and death).

Only a *jīvanmukta,* one who has achieved liberation in this life, is truly aware that his reality is *ātman.* The spiritual 'fool' (suffering from *avidyā* or spiritual ignorance) deems his *ahankāra* to be his real self. Nevertheless, the theoretical knowledge of the *ātman* is already the first step on the way to self-realization *(ātmajñāna),* attained when the soul rises above the level of the universal mind. While held within the three realms of the mind, the *ātman* can never truly know itself. The individual may be aware intellectually and intuitively that his real essence is soul, but it is not until the multiple coverings of the mind are shed that the pure *ātman* emerges into the realms of pure spirit, a free soul. There, for the first time since leaving its original home and descending into the creation, it knows itself as soul – pure and free.

The *Ātmabodha (Self-Knowledge)* attributed to the ninth-century philosopher, Shankara, is devoted to an exposition of the nature of the *ātman.* He writes:

> Because of identification with the five sheaths *(koshas),* the pure *ātman* seems to be like them, just as a crystal in the proximity of a blue garment (appears blue).
>
> By discrimination, separate the pure and inner self from its covering sheaths *(koshas),* as rice is separated from its husk by pounding in a vessel....
>
> Know the *ātman* to be distinct from the body, sense organs, mind, *buddhi* (intellect) and matter *(prakṛiti),* witnessing their activities like a king.
>
> To those lacking discrimination, the *ātman* appears to be acting, when it is really the senses (which are acting), just as the moon appears to move when clouds move across the sky.

> Drawing upon the consciousness of the soul *(ātmachaitanya)*, the body, mind, senses and intellect are engaged in their respective activities, just as people depend upon the light of the sun.
>
> Lacking discrimination, fools ascribe the functions of the body and the senses to the pure *ātman*, which is absolute existence and consciousness *(sach-chit)*, just as they attribute blueness and so on to the sky.
>
> Just as ripples on water are attributed, through ignorance, to the moon reflected in it, so too are the sense of agency, enjoyment and other limitations *(upādhi)* of the mind falsely attributed to the *ātman*....
>
> Just as luminosity is the nature of the sun, coolness of water, and heat of fire, so too the nature of the self *(ātman)* is eternity, purity, reality, consciousness and bliss....
>
> The *ātman* never acts, and the *buddhi* (intellect) has no independent consciousness. But the individual is deluded, thinking himself to be the seer and the knower....
>
> The *ātman* alone illuminates the mind, the sense organs and so on, just as a lamp illuminates pots or jars, which, being inert, cannot illuminate themselves.
>
> The *ātman*, being consciousness *(bodha)* itself, needs no other instrument of consciousness *(bodha)* to illuminate itself, just as a lighted lamp needs no other lamp for its own illumination....
>
> The *ātman* is an ever present reality, unrealized because of ignorance. The *ātman* is realized on the destruction of ignorance, like a missing necklace (all the time) on one's neck.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 15–16, 18–22, 24, 26, 28–29, 44*

The *Upanishads* and *Advaita* Vedantists have consistently taught that the *ātman* is of the same essence as *Brahman*, the ultimate Reality. Saints and mystics have also said the same:

> The Lord abides in the soul *(ātam)* and the soul *(ātam)* in the Lord:
> through the *Guru*'s wisdom, I have realized this.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1153, MMS*

> What can I say concerning the peace of the soul *(ātam)?*
> Only those who have experienced it, know it:
> they dwell forever in the soul *(ātam)*.
> Say, how strong is your desire to attain this state?
> Those who do not realize the peace of the soul *(ātam)*
> suffer the loss of their capital.
> Those who realize the peace of the soul *(ātam)*,
> their joy increases day by day.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 24:1.56–59, SBP p.203*

See also: **ātmabodha** (▸2), **attā**, **hún**, **jān**, **ñe'eng**, **neshamah**, **ruaḥ**, **rūḥ**.

ātmatattva (H) *Lit.* soul *(ātmā)* essence *(tattva);* spiritual essence; the soul:

> If the *jīva* does not realize that *ātmatattva* (soul) which is the one reality in the human body, but wastes it in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, he is but an animal in human form, leading the life of an animal.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 2:230, SB p.126*

attā (Pa) *Lit.* self; from the same root as the Sanskrit *ātman* (self, soul, spirit). It is said in Buddhism that *attā* was used by the Buddha as a general term for the self, rather than the soul, since Buddhism does not believe in an unchanging, indestructible and immortal part of man, even though *nirvāṇa* is regarded as an immortal, eternal state. There are certainly many instances, when the Buddha speaks of controlling the self, where he is referring not to any immortal essence in man, but to the human sense of self. In the *Dhammapada,* he says that he who conquers his self *(attā)* is the greatest conqueror of all:

> Though a man should conquer a million men in battle,
> he indeed would be the greater conqueror
> who had conquered his own self *(attā).*
> Truly, conquest of self *(attā)* is far greater
> than the conquest of others;
> Neither a god, nor a *ghandabba* (heavenly musician),
> nor *Māra* (god of death) and *Brahmā* (the creator-god) together,
> can overturn the victory of such a one.
>
> *Dhammapada 8:4–6*

He also says that only one who has controlled himself can instruct others:

> A person should first establish
> what is proper in his own self *(attā),*
> then he can teach others.
> In this way, a wise man will not suffer.
>
> A person should live his life as he directs others.
> Having controlled his own self *(attā),*
> he might then be able to control (others).
> For the self *(attā)* is, indeed, difficult to control.

> Only the self *(attā)* can be the ruler of the self *(attā):*
> what other ruler could there be?
> With the self *(attā)* controlled,
> a person finds a ruler who is (otherwise) difficult to find.
>
> By the self *(attā)* alone is evil *(pāpa)* done;
> It is born of the self *(attā),*
> caused by the self *(attā).*
> It crushes a fool as a diamond grinds a gem.
>
> *Dhammapada 12:2–5*

In the *attā,* he says, is the beginning and end of everything. The higher self must conquer the lower self:

> Exhort yourself *(attā)* with your self *(attā),*
> examine yourself *(attā)* with your self *(attā).*
> Thus, O *bhikkhu,* attentive and watched over by yourself *(attā),*
> you will live in happiness.
>
> For the self *(attā)* is ruler of the self *(attā),*
> the self *(attā)* is your refuge.
> Therefore, control your self *(attā),*
> as a merchant controls a fine horse.
>
> *Dhammapada 25:20–21*

Everyone has his own work, he also says. The work of the "virtuous" or holy is to "control themselves":

> Engineers guide water;
> Fletchers straighten shafts (for arrows);
> Carpenters work with wood;
> The virtuous control themselves *(attā).*
>
> *Dhammapada 10:17*

In these and other instances, the Buddha is clearly speaking of a human self. Even so, it is uncertain whether, by *attā,* he always meant the self in this sense. Sometimes, it seems equally possible that he is speaking of an essential and indestructible part of man.

During his own lifetime, none of the Buddha's teachings were written down, presumably at his request. The Buddha would have known how easily the recorded word could be misrepresented and misunderstood. So although the sayings in the *Dhammapada* are attributed to the Buddha, and were organized as an oral body of teachings shortly after his death, they were not written down until several hundred years later. After that, they were hand copied, person to person, as was the way with all ancient manuscripts, until at least the sixteenth century, when the first printing press came to India. The *Dhammapada*, which predates the development of Buddhist philosophy and psychology, contains a number of sayings where *attā* seems to refer to a part of man that is higher than his normal human 'self':

> If a person considers his self *(attā)* to be dear,
> he should vigilantly watch over himself.
> A wise man should keep a vigil
> during one of the three watches of the night.
>
> *Dhammapada 12:1*

Here, to "keep a vigil" in the night would presumably refer to meditation, which no one denies was an essential part of the Buddha's teachings. This "self" is certainly a higher self than the one that must be controlled. The same is true when he says:

> It is easy to do things
> that are harmful to one's self *(attā)*.
> It is very difficult to do
> that which is beneficial and good.
>
> *Dhammapada 12:7*

And again:

> The fool *(bāla)* is troubled, thinking:
> "These are my sons," "This is my wealth."
> But his own self *(attā)* does not belong to himself *(attā)*.
> Whence, then, the sons? Whence the wealth? …
>
> Fools *(bāla)*, being of little understanding,
> are enemies of themselves *(attā)*.
> Wandering about, they perform evil deeds
> whose fruit is bitter.
>
> *Dhammapada 5:3, 7*

And again:

> Delight in mindfulness *(appamāda)*,
> guard your mind with care.
> Extricate your self *(attā)* from the path of evil,
> as does an elephant stuck in the mud.
>
> *Dhammapada 23:8*

Buddha certainly taught the existence of a higher self, but from his extant teachings, little remains that defines the nature of this self, one way or the other.

See also: **ātman**.

ayam ātmā Brahma (S) *Lit.* this *(ayam)* self *(ātmā)* is *Brahman (Brahma)*; one of the many sayings from the *Upanishads* which exemplify their central theme of the identity of the *ātmā* (soul or real self) with the supreme Reality or *Brahman;* commonly listed as one of the four *mahāvākyas* (great utterances). The fuller context is:

> Truly, all this is *Brahman.* This *ātmā* is *Brahman.*
> *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad 2; cf. Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 2:5.19*

See also: **mahāvākya**.

bād (P) *Lit.* wind, air; one of the essential elements comprising physical forms, according to Islamic philosophy. In this respect, Islamic thought followed the ancient Greeks.

See also: **arba' 'anāṣir**, **bād** (3.1), **vāyu**.

bhūl sunn (H) *Lit.* 'sky' or gateway *(sunn)* of error or forgetfulness *(bhūl);* the 'sky' of the physical body; the subtle gateway or interface between the astral *(aṇḍa)* and physical *(piṇḍa)* realms; the subastral region through which the soul has to pass on its descent into a physical body, and conversely the 'area' through which the soul must pass on its ascent from the body.

All the commonly known psychic powers lie within this region. It is the area of the human mind, with its various faculties, where the seeds of destiny are also stored. These can therefore be read by a soul whose inner concentration is raised to this level. In a letter to a disciple, the twentieth-century Indian mystic, Mahārāj Charan Singh, once wrote to a disciple:

> Extrasensory perception or clairvoyance is a special gift of nature given to certain individuals, so we cannot generalize any theory about it. Sometimes (but very rarely), it so happens that at the time of birth, the soul, while being taken through the *bhūl sunn* (the place where all knowledge of previous experiences is effaced from the soul's memory and where it loses all its brilliance), passes through the *sunn*

> so swiftly that some of the finer qualities of the spirit are not totally removed. Then, on entering the human body, the soul begins to give early signs of its special brilliancy in the form of second sight or extrasensory perception.
>
> The only way to acquire these powers is to remove the dark coverings from the soul by means of spiritual exercises. A *satsangī* (initiate) gets these powers incidentally and by the way, without any desire, while advancing towards his goal inside. But *satsangīs* are strictly forbidden to make any use of such powers. In fact, they are enjoined to ignore them. Huzūr Mahārāj (Sāwan Singh) Jī used to call these powers "the painted prostitutes" in the way, who mislead and waylay the passers-by.
>
> So my advice to you is to give your whole time and full attention to *bhajan* and *simran* (meditation practices), and not to dabble in such supernatural powers. A *satsangī* should always keep his eye fixed on his goal, and should not be led astray by the mind's temptations.
>
> *Mahārāj Charan Singh, Divine Light 239, DL pp.282–83*

See also: **cup of forgetfulness** (6.3).

bhūt(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* something which has come into being; something manifest; hence, the five elements or *tattvas,* subtle or gross; also, the mental and spiritual aspects of a person which survive bodily death; hence also, a spirit, a demon, a ghost, an elemental, particularly of a malignant kind.

See also: **bhūta** (4.2), **tattva**.

bīj(a) sharīr(a) (S/H) *Lit.* seed *(bīj)* body *(sharīr);* the causal body *(kāraṇ sharīr),* sometimes also called the mental body, which is acquired by the soul in the second or causal region, *trikuṭī,* on its descent into the realms of the mind. It is so called because the causal realm and the associated causal body and mind contain the seed essences of all actions, thoughts, energies and everything else that are manifested in the astral and physical realms that lie below.

See also: **kāraṇa sharīra**, **sharīra**.

bird A common metaphor for the soul in the literature of many countries and religions. Just as most birds can fly freely to escape from difficulties encountered on the earth, so too can the soul escape from the entanglements of material life by flying upward on the current of the Spirit. Birds are also commonly kept in cages or caught by a fowler in a snare or net, just as the soul in this world is held captive in the cage or snare of the body and physical existence, unable to fly freely in the open air. As it says in one of the Manichaean psalms:

> Like a bird in a snare,
> so also am I while I am in the body of death.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXXV, MPB p.95*

Using the same analogy, the Lord or Saviour is therefore portrayed as the one who releases the soul from the snare or net, as in the biblical *Psalms:*

> Blessed be *Yahweh* …
> who let us escape like birds from the fowler's net.
> He tore the net and we escaped;
> Our help is in the Name of *Yahweh,*
> who made heaven and earth.
> *Psalm 124:6–7, JB*

In another of the Manichaean psalms, the Saviour is depicted as Jesus, who broke the "snares" and "traps" that bind souls to this world:

> O Christ whom I have loved, belonging unto you,
> I fell into the snares of the body of death.
> The trappers that set traps for me
> caught me beneath their nets.
> They excluded me from the air of freedom
> of the beautiful birds.
> Behold, then you came after me, Jesus, my light,
> the releaser of them that are bound:
> I broke their snares,
> I burst their nets by the faith of your Truth.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXXI; cf. MPB p.89*

Words for 'air', 'breath' and 'spirit' were the same in Greek, Hebrew and some other Semitic languages. Thus, the "air of freedom of the beautiful birds" conveys a double meaning: the bird of the soul is free when it flies in the realm of the Spirit.

In another of these psalms, the Master is described as the "Son of the Brightnesses and the Richnesses" and as one of the "Living Ones" who "let the birds fly out in the air" – another allusion to the "air" of the Spirit:

> The Son of the Brightnesses and the Richnesses
>   armed himself and girt his loins;
> He leapt and sped down into the abyss (this world)....
> He broke their snares that were set,
>   he burst also their nets that were spread.
> He let the fish out to their sea,
>   he let the birds fly in the air.
> He let the birds fly out in the air,
>   he let the sheep into their fold.
> He rolled up his wealth,
>   he took it, he took it up to the land of rest.
> That which the Living Ones took was saved:
>   they will return again to that which is theirs.
>
> *Psalms of Thomas I, Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB pp.204–5*

Another psalm, addressed to the mystic Mānī, speaks of the soul who has escaped from the body and from this world as having "ascended like a swift bird into the air of the gods" (the inner realms):

> You have been released
>   from the grievous bonds of the flesh....
> The authority of the flesh –
>   you have passed quickly beyond it:
> You have ascended like a swift bird
>   into the air of the gods....
>
> You have quickly escaped from the fearful [realm of darkness];
> You have found rest in the paradise of Life.
> You have reached the place
>   where there is neither heat nor cold,
>   where there is neither hunger nor thirst....
>
> You have been victorious, O Mānī:
> You have given victory to them
>   that have shown zeal for God.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLIV; cf. MPB pp.64–65*

In the fashion of Middle Eastern literature, in one of the biblical psalms, a more complex avian imagery of the soul is used:

> I live in a desert like the pelican,
>   in a ruin like the screech owl.

I stay awake, lamenting
  like a lone bird on the roof.
Psalm 102:6–7, JB

Here, the "desert" is this world, where the soul is out of its natural element, like a pelican away from water. The "ruin" is the body. The "screech owl" or barn owl, which commonly nests in ramshackle buildings, goes on calling the same short refrain throughout the night, like a soul awake in meditation, calling constantly on God. The "roof" of the body is the eye centre, where the soul sits alone ("a lone bird"), "lamenting" – full of yearning for the divine Beloved.

In some of the Manichaean and Mandaean texts, the souls are portrayed as birds who live in the Tree of Life, a metaphor for the divine creative power:

The bright sun and the shining full moon,
  they shine and glitter from the trunk of this Tree.
Radiant birds are there, playing blissfully,
  doves and peacocks of all colours exult there.
Manichaean Hymns, HR2 p.69, RMP dd; cf. GSR p.126:3, ML p.38, MM p.91

In the Mandaean *John-Book,* an extensive allegory is related in which a flock of birds (souls) settle in the Tree of Life. But a fierce tempest (the storms of life) comes, blowing some of them away, while others cling on. Subsequently, a white eagle (the Saviour) lands on the tree, and explains that it has come to feed and nourish the birds that remained on the Tree, while the others were caught by the bird catchers, and by the hawks and harriers (the entanglements of physical existence). In this allegorical poem, the probably mythical Miryaī is identified with the Tree of Life – a "Vine" – though she is more usually cast as the devotee:

Miryaī am I, a Vine, a Tree
  that stands at the mouth of the Euphrates.
The leaves of the Tree are jewels,
  the fruit of the Tree are pearls.
The Vine Tree's foliage is glory,
  its shoots, precious light.
Among the trees its scent it diffuses,
  which spreads through all the worlds.

The birds of the air caught its fragrance,
  a flock settled on the Tree.
A flock settled on it,
  and they would build their nests there.

But they flutter about in it,
and do not settle down peacefully.
Of its foliage, they eat falling leaves,
from its inner part, they drink wine.
Yet they eat what does not fall and die,
and they drink what is not wine.

Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.131–32; cf. GJB p.65, JM pp.129–30, MEM pp.147

The "Vine" is the Word itself. The "fruit of the Tree" are pearls, another common mystic symbol, here representing the precious fruits of spiritual attainment. The souls are symbolized as "birds of the air", employing a familiar air-spirit wordplay. They eat the "foliage" and "shoots" of "glory" and "precious light", and drink the "wine" of the "Vine Tree".

Several centuries later, the Sufis commonly likened the soul to a caged or hunted bird. Rūmī frequently uses the term, sometimes likening the bird to a falcon on the king's wrist or to a caged parrot. He writes:

The bird that is a prisoner in a cage,
if it seeks no escape, it is from ignorance.
The spirits which have escaped from their cages
are the prophets, those worthy guides.
From without comes their voice, telling of religion,
saying, "This, this is your way of escape.
By this means, we escaped from this narrow cage:
there is no means of escape from this cage but this way."

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1541–44; cf. MJR2 p.85

In an allusion to the divine Music, Rūmī also speaks of a great minstrel, a harper, "at whose song, the bird of the soul would take wing".[1] Later in the same story, he describes the inner flight of the harper in an anguish of longing to find God. The harper goes to a graveyard (this world) and lies down upon a tomb (the body), cradling his head upon his harp as a pillow:

Sleep overtook him:
the bird, his soul, escaped from captivity;
It let harp and harper go and darted away.
It became freed from the body and the pain of this world
in the simple (spiritual) world
and the vast region of the soul.
There his soul was singing what had befallen (it):
"If they would but let me stay here,
happy would be my soul in this garden and springtide,
drunken with this far plain and mystic anemone field.

With neither head nor foot, I would be journeying;
With neither lip nor tooth, I would be eating sugar.
With a memory and thought free from brainsickness,
  I would frolic with the dwellers in heaven.
With eyes shut, I would be seeing a whole world,
  without a hand I would be gathering roses and basil."
The water bird (his soul) was plunged in a sea of honey –
  … in which to drink and wash.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2089–96; cf. MJR2 p.113

Many other Sufis have used the same metaphor. In his well-known poem, *The Conference of the Birds,* Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (*c.* 1142–1230), allegorizes the soul's quest for the Divine as the journey of a company of birds of different species, under the guidance of the hoopoe, seeking their king who lives far away, and who can only be reached after an arduous journey.

Indian mystics have used similar imagery. In the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad,* the individual soul and the supreme Soul or Reality are likened to two identical birds who sit in the same tree. But the one does not know the other.[2] Among later mystics, the term has again been widely used. Ravidās, for instance, uses the image of the soul as a caged bird:

The body is a wall of water, supported by the pillar of air,
  and ovary and semen are its mortar.
The skeleton is of bones, flesh and veins:
  within it abides the poor soul-bird *(pankhī).*

Ravidās, Ādi Granth 659, MMS

Kabīr, on the other hand, likens the mind to a wandering bird:

Kabīr, the mind has become like a bird *(pankhī),*
  flying and taking wing, it goes in ten directions.
As is the company it associates with,
  so is the fruit it eats.

Kabīr, Ādi Granth 1369, MMS

Like the Sufis, the soul is sometimes compared to a particular species. Guru Nānak speaks of the soul as a speaking parrot dwelling "in the cage of divine love". The body is the "cage of divine love" in the sense that the soul, an expression of divine love, is caged in the body:

In the cage of divine love,
  parrot *(sūhaṭ),* the utterer, utters the Lord's praise.
It pecks at Truth, quaffs Nectar *(Amrit),*
  and flies out but once, and returns not.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1010, MMS

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* I:2073; *MJR2* p.112.
2. *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* 3:1.1–2.

body, mind, soul (Haitian, Native North American) Generally speaking, the body is the physical part of a person or creature; mystically, a body refers to any of the coverings of the mind and soul – physical, astral or causal.

It is not so much a belief as an awareness and a consciousness that the body is something different from the spiritual part of man. When the body dies, this spiritual part goes somewhere else. Something of this understanding seems to be present in practically all spiritual traditions. A passage from *The Serpent and the Rainbow* by Wade Davies, for instance, demonstrates a fusion of French, African and indigenous cultures in Haitian spirituality (vodoun):

> The players in this drama (of the human form) are the basic components of man: the *z'étoile*, the *gros bon ange*, the *ti bon ange*, the *n'âme*, and the *corps cadavre*. The latter is the body itself, the flesh and blood. The *n'âme* is the spirit of the flesh that allows each cell of the body to function....
>
> The *n'âme* (*lit.* the soul) is the gift from God, which upon death of the *corps cadavre* (*lit.* body-corpse) begins to pass slowly into the organism of the soil.... The *z'étoile* (the star) is the one spiritual component that resides not in the body but in the sky. It is the individual's star of destiny ... that carries one's hope and all the many ordered events for the next life of the soul, a blueprint that will be a function of the course of the previous lifetime. If the shooting star is bright, so shall be the future of the individual.
>
> The two aspects of the vodoun soul, the *ti bon ange* and the *gros bon ange*, are best explained by the metaphor used by the Haitians themselves. Sometimes, when one stands in the late afternoon light, the body casts a double shadow, a dark core and a lighter penumbra, faint like the halo that sometimes surrounds the full moon. The ephemeral fringe is the *ti bon ange* – 'the little good angel' – while the image at the centre is the *gros bon ange*, 'the big good angel'.
>
> The latter is the life force that all sentient beings share; it enters the individual at conception, and functions only to keep the body alive. At clinical death, it returns immediately to God, and once again becomes part of the great reservoir of energy that supports all life.
>
> But if the *gros bon ange* is undifferentiated energy, the *ti bon ange* is the part of the soul directly associated with the individual. As the *gros bon ange* provides each person with the power to act, it is the *ti bon ange* that moulds the individual sentiments within each act. It is one's aura, and the source of all personality, character and willpower.
>
> *Wade Davis, The Serpent and the Rainbow, SR p.181*

Seen in the context of other mystical schools of thought, the *corps cadavre* clearly refers to the physical, material body. The *n'âme* is the etheric body, the vital life energy that makes the body function. The *z'étoile* is that aspect of the mind which carries the individual destiny. The *ti bon ange* refers to all the subtle mental elements that go to make up an individual, possibly including the astral body. The *gros bon ange* is the drop of the Divine, the immortal soul.

The French word for soul is *l'âme,* but although the French-Haitian *n'âme* is clearly derived from the French, the meaning given to it, at least in this extract, is different. The Creole equivalents are *kô kadav (corps cadavre), nan'm (n'âme), gwo bon'anj (gros bon ange), ti bon'anj (ti bon ange)* and *zetwal (z'étoile).*

The same understanding of a separation of body, mind and spirit is found in Native North American spirituality. Charles Eastman (1858–1939) gives his impression of the way the Native American saw things:

> The Red Man divided mind into two parts: the spiritual mind and the physical mind. The first is pure spirit, concerned only with the essence of things, and it was this he thought to strengthen by spiritual prayer, during which the body is subdued by fasting and hardships. In this type of prayer, there was no beseeching of favour or help. All matters of personal or selfish concern, as success in hunting or warfare, relief from sickness or the sparing of a beloved life, were definitely relegated to the plane of the lower or material mind, and all ceremonies, charms or incantations designed to secure a benefit or to avert a danger, were recognized as emanating from the physical self.
>
> *Charles Eastman, SI p.12*

And the Native American Sioux, Black Elk, speaking about the death of Crazy Horse, observes:

> It does not matter where his body lies, for it is grass. But where his spirit is, it will be good to be.
>
> *Black Elk, in BES p.145*

body of air One of a number of bodies surrounding the soul, listed in the *Untitled Text* of the *Bruce Codex;* possibly equivalent to the causal body, presumably so-called because of its lightness **and** subtlety. The *Untitled Text* says that the Mother (the Holy Spirit) gave the Son (the Master) the power to travel in all the realms of creation. For this purpose, she equipped him with "a garment" that includes within it bodies suited to existence in each of these realms:

And she gave to him a garment
  in which to accomplish all things.
And in it were all bodies:
  the body of fire (astral?),
  and the body of water (?),
  and the body of air (causal?),
  and the body of earth (human?),
  and the body of wind (etheric?),
  and the body of angels, and the body of archangels,
  and the body of powers, and the body of mighty ones,
  and the body of gods, and the body of lords.
In a word, within it were all bodies,
  so that none should hinder him
  from going to the Height or from going down to the abyss.

Untitled Text 256–57:16, BC pp.274–77

See also: **jism**, **kāraṇa sharīra**, **taijasa sharīra**.

body of earth The physical body; a common term found in various forms in mystic literature, also encountered in such variants as 'vessel of clay' and so on.

See also: **body of air**, **physical body**, **piṇḍa** (4.1).

body of fire See **body of air**.

body of wind One of various bodies surrounding the soul as listed in the *Untitled Text* of the *Bruce Codex*. These bodies include:

The body of fire (astral?),
  and the body of water (?),
  and the body of air (causal?)
  and the body of earth (human),
  and the body of wind (etheric?).

Untitled Text 256:16, BC pp.274–75

It is unclear from the context what each of the various bodies refer to, but a fair assumption would be that the "body of wind" is the etheric body – the subtle aspect of the physical body, through which the subtle life energies flow.

See also: **body of air**, **etheric body**.

brahmāṇḍī man (H) *Lit.* mind *(man)* pertaining to *brahmāṇḍa;* the universal mind which pervades the subtle worlds of *brahmāṇḍa;* also called the *kāraṇ man* (causal mind) or *nij man* (innermost mind); a term probably coined by Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, who also used the Indian mythological term, *brahmāṇḍa,* for the worlds of the mind, identifying *Brahm,* meaning *Brahman,* as the highest region in the mind worlds.

The *brahmāṇḍī man* possesses inward and upward tendencies, thereby aiding in the uplift of the soul. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

> There are two minds, *brahmāṇḍī* (universal) and *piṇḍī* (individual). The former has its seat in *trikuṭī* and *sahans dal kanwal....* The latter is behind the eyes and in the heart. It is the *piṇḍī* mind which carries on the business of the world, with the help of the soul, which has become so attached to it as to acquire a downward tendency along with it towards the lower physical regions.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 1:8, SB p.7*

See also: **aṇḍī man**, **brahmāṇḍa** (4.1), **universal mind** (6.1).

Brahmarandhra (S/H) *Lit.* aperture, crevice or opening *(randhra)* of *Brahma;* a subtle aperture in the crown of the head, lying at the upper end of the *sushumṇā* in the body, through which the soul is said to leave the body either at the time of death or during yogic practice. The *sushumṇā* is the central *nāḍī* (current of *prāṇa* or subtle life energy) which runs along the spine, through the six bodily *chakras* (centres of *prāṇa*), whose opening at its lower end into the *mūlādhāra, ādhāra* or *padma chakra* is 'guarded' by the 'sleeping' *kuṇḍalinī* (unawakened pranic energy). The *Yogashikhā Upanishad* says simply:

> Crossing the six *chakras,* (the soul) leaves through the *Brahmarandhra.*
>
> *Yogashikhā Upanishad 6:33, HTU pp.407–8*

According to some yogic texts, the centre or 'lotus' located in the *Brahmarandhra* is called the *sahasrāra* (*lit.* thousand-spoked), sometimes described as the seventh *chakra* in the physical body. The *Shiva Saṃhitā* describes things in a detailed, though idiosyncratic, manner:

> The *sushumṇā* goes along the spinal cord up to where the *Brahmarandhra* is situated. Thence, by a certain bend, it goes to the right side of the *ājñā* lotus, whence it proceeds to the left nostril.... The lotus which is situated in the *Brahmarandhra* is called *sahasrāra.*
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 5:102–3; cf. SSV p.70*

The *Shiva Saṃhitā* suggests that not only should the aperture at the upper end of the *sushumṇā* be termed the *Brahmarandhra,* but also the entire central 'canal' running the length of the *sushumṇā:*

> From the base or root of the palate, the *sushumṇā* extends downwards until it reaches the *mūlādhāra (chakra)* and the perineum: all vessels *(i.e. nāḍīs)* surround it or are supported by it. These *nāḍīs* are the seeds of mystery, or the sources of all the essences that go to make up man's constitution, and show the road to *Brahman* (*i.e.* give salvation).
>
> The lotus which is at the root of the palate is called *sahasrāra:* in its centre, there is a *yoni* (*lit.* a source, a seat or force centre), facing downwards. The root of the *sushumṇā* is in that, together with its central hollow; this is called the *Brahmarandhra,* extending down to the *mūlādhāra* lotus.
>
> In that central hollow of the *sushumṇā,* the *kuṇḍalinī* dwells, as its inner force. In the *sushumṇā,* there is also a constant current of force called *chitra* (*lit.* image), whose actions or modifications should be called, in my opinion, *Brahmarandhra.*
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 5:121–24; cf. SSV p.73*

Although not entirely clear, the *Shiva Saṃhitā* appears to be identifying the *Brahmarandhra* with the *sahasrāra,* which it locates at the root of the palate. If this is meant literally, this location would appear to be inaccurate or at least inconsistent with other uses of these two terms.

Speaking of the three main spinal *nāḍīs* of *iḍā, pingalā* and *sushumṇā,* the *Shiva Saṃhitā* again identifies the central hollow in the *sushumṇā* with the *Brahmarandhra:*

> The innermost of these three *(i.e. sushumṇā)* is called *chitra;* it is my beloved. In it, there is the subtlest of all hollows, called *Brahmarandhra.*
>
> Brilliant with five colours (of the five *tattvas,* the elemental states of matter), pure, moving in the middle of *sushumṇā,* this *chitra* is the life-giving part of body and the centre of the *sushumṇā.*
>
> In the *Shāstras,* this has been called the 'heavenly way'; this is the giver of the joy of immortality; by contemplating on it, the great *yogī* destroys all sins.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 2:18–20; cf. SSV p.18*

The writer also speaks of how, in the majority of people, the subtle "vital air" *(prāṇa* or *vāyu)* or life energy wanders ceaselessly around the *nāḍīs* without any conscious control. As a result, he says, the soul remains in the cycle of transmigration. By controlling the flow of *prāṇa* and "bathing" at the "mouth of the *Brahmarandhra*", "salvation" can be "attained":

> Because of this (uncontrolled flow of *vāyu*), man wanders in the circle of the universe; therefore, the *yogīs* do not wish to remain in this circulation. All the *nāḍīs* are bound by eight knots; only this *kuṇḍalinī* can pierce these knots and pass out of the *Brahmarandhra*, and can lead the way to salvation.
>
> When the vital air is fully contained in all the vessels *(i.e. nāḍīs)*, then the *kuṇḍalinī* leaves these knots and forces its way through the *Brahmarandhra.*
>
> Then the vital air flows freely in the *sushumṇā.* On the right and the left side of the *mūlādhāra,* are situated the *iḍā* and the *pingalā.* The *sushumṇā* passes through the middle of it.
>
> The hollow of the *sushumṇā* in the sphere of the *ādhāra* is called the *Brahmarandhra.* The wise one who knows this is emancipated from the chain of *karma.*
>
> These three vessels *(i.e. nāḍīs)* meet certainly at the mouth of the *Brahmarandhra;* by bathing at this place, salvation is undoubtedly attained.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 5:127–31; cf. SSV p.74*

The writer goes on to call this meeting place of the three *nāḍīs, triveṇī* (*lit.* three braids). This seems to be the meeting of these three currents in the region of *sahasrāra,* also called *sahans dal kanwal.* Indian mystics have also spoken of another meeting of these three currents above the realm of the mind, where the soul first knows itself as mind. Further extolling the virtues of the *Brahmarandhra,* the *Shiva Saṃhitā* also continues:

> If the mind becomes steadily fixed at the *Brahmarandhra,* even for half a second, one becomes free from sins and reaches the highest end.
>
> The holy *yogī,* whose mind is thus absorbed, is absorbed in me *(Shiva)* after having enjoyed the miraculous powers known as *aṇimā, laghimā* and so on.
>
> He who knows this *Brahmarandhra* becomes my beloved in this world; conquering sins, he becomes entitled to salvation; by spreading knowledge, he saves thousands of people.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 5:141–43; cf. SSV p.76*

See also: **kuṇḍalinī yoga** (▸2), **sahasrāra**, **sushumṇā** (4.1), **triveṇī** (4.1).

Buddha nature An expression used for the soul in the Manichaean Chinese texts from Chinese Turkestan, referring to the essence of man which has the power to become God – to become a *Buddha*. More common Manichaean expressions for the soul were the 'nature of light' or the 'particle of light'. In this poem, the devotee is begging "Jesus *Buddha*" to protect him from the snares and pitfalls of this world, and release him from the cycle of birth and death:

> May the great Saint quickly stretch out his compassionate hands,
> and caress the bright head of my *Buddha* nature.
> At every hour always watch and protect me,
> and let not the devilish horde come and injure me.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns; cf. LSMH p.179:39*

See also: **nature of light**, **particle of light**.

buddhi (S/H/Pu), **buddh** (Pu) *Lit.* intellect, wisdom, understanding, reason, insight, comprehension; hence, the reasoning faculty, discriminating power, discriminative intelligence; also, specifically, one of the aspects of the *antaḥkaraṇa* (the human mind). In this latter context, the special functions of *buddhi* are ascertainment and decision. It is hence pure rationality, the ground of all intellectual and reasoning processes. As the fifteenth-century *sannyāsin*, Sadānanda Yogīndra, wrote in *Vedāntasāra*, a book that has become a traditional Vedantic source text:

> Intellect *(buddhi)* is that function of the internal instrument *(antaḥkaraṇa)* which discriminates.... This intellect *(buddhi)*, together with the organs of perception, constitutes the sheath of intelligence *(vijñānamaya-kosha)*.
>
> *Sadānanda, Vedāntasāra 2:65, 72*

In the majority of incarnate souls, the soul *(ātman)* is dominated by the mind *(manas)* and the mind by the senses *(indriyas)*. Vedantic texts, however, suggest that the mind can be ruled by the exercise of the *buddhi* or discriminative faculty, the intelligence that distinguishes man from animals. This is understanding reason or intellect in its highest aspect, as a reflection of the higher aspects of the mind.

The teaching is epitomized in a well-known parable from the *Kaṭha Upanishad* in which the *ātman* is portrayed as the owner of a chariot. The body is the chariot itself, the senses *(indriyas)* are the horses, the objects of the world perceived by the senses are the roads, the mind *(manaḥ)* is the reins, and the *buddhi* is the charioteer who is supposed to guide the horses over roads rough and smooth while the master of the chariot sits peacefully as the observer, and enjoys the ride:

Know the *ātman* to be the owner of the chariot,
the body, the chariot,
the *buddhi,* the charioteer,
and the mind *(manaḥ),* the reins.

The senses, they say, are the horses,
the sense-objects, the roads.
The *ātman,* associated with the body, the senses and the mind,
is – so say the wise – the enjoyer.

He who has no understanding,
whose mind is always unrestrained –
His senses are uncontrolled,
like the wild horses of a poor charioteer.

But he who has understanding,
whose mind is always restrained –
His senses are under control,
like the well-trained horses of a good charioteer.

He who has no understanding,
who has no control over his mind,
and always remains impure –
He never attains the goal,
but returns again to *saṃsāra* (worldly existence).

But he who has understanding,
who has control over his mind,
and always remains pure –
He attains that goal
from which he will not be born again.

He who has understanding for his charioteer,
and firmly holds the reins of his mind –
He reaches the end of the journey:
the supreme dwelling of the All-pervading.

Kaṭha Upanishad 1:3.3–9

The meaning of the parable is clear. Indian Saints have generally agreed that a high degree of discrimination is required for any individual to tread the mystic path. However, they also point out that since the *buddhi* is an aspect of the mind, it is unable of its own to help a soul go beyond the mind, and hence to be truly liberated from birth and death. For liberation, Saints say that the help of a power that comes from beyond the mind is required, and they point to the Creative Word as the only power that can really help. The *Upanishads* do not disagree, for their writers also point out the supreme efficacy of *Om,* the creative Power, in the quest for enlightenment.

The term *buddhi* is also used in a general sense to mean the everyday wisdom, reason or understanding by which man tries to solve his problems and find answers to his questions. Speaking of the higher functioning of the discriminative process, 'Ināyat Khān writes:

> Reason in its essence is of a liquid character; it is the cream of intelligence. When it is crystallized, it becomes rigid. Intellectuality very often expresses a knowledge formed by reasons, most of them of rigid character. But the finer reasoning is subtle; the finer the reasoning, the less it can be explained in words. Therefore, people with fine reasoning cannot very well put their reason into words. Reason in its essence is the depth of intelligence. The intelligence knows, not because it has learned; it knows because it knows. In this higher reason, the spirit of guidance is conceived, and from the fountain of reason all the great prophets have drunk....
>
> *Buddhi,* which is subtle reasoning, is the path which leads to the goal, and its absence keeps a person in obscurity. As the sun is the source of light which shows outward things in life, so *buddhi* is the inner source of light which enables man to see life clearly, both inwardly and outwardly.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK9 p.167*

In the majority of people, intellect and reasoning arise from the impure functioning of *buddhi,* distracted by the mind and senses under the influence of the individual's *karma.* Pure or impure, however, mystics have pointed out that no amount of intellectual cleverness, nor even the discrimination of a pure and moral kind, will lead a soul to salvation. Hence, Guru Nānak says:

> Through intellect *(buddhi),* recitation and great cleverness,
> the Lord is not obtained:
> What the soul desires is attained by love.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 436, MMS*

And speaking of the effect of conscious contact with the creative Power:

> His intellect *(buddhi)* is illumined and renowned,
> and turning away from the world,
> his heart lotus blossoms forth.
> He is cool, calm and content, and all his thirst is quenched.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 811, MMS*

In the *Sānkhya* school, *buddhi* is known as *mahat* (cosmic intelligence), and is regarded as the first manifestation of *prakṛiti* (the primal blueprint of nature).

See also: **antaḥkaraṇa**.

causal body A body formed of the ultrafine mental energies of causal matter, required for the existence of a soul in the causal region. In some gnostic literature, the causal body is called the body of air because of its highly subtle nature.[1] It is probable that the esoteric use of the term 'air' is also derived from a play on words in the Greek, Hebrew and other languages, where the words for wind and spirit (Gk. *pneuma,* He. *ruaḥ*) are the same.

See also: **body of air**, **kāraṇa sharīra**, **regions** (4.1).

1. *Untitled Text* 256–57:16, *BC* pp.274–75.

chahār band (P) *Lit.* four *(chahār)* cords or fetters *(band);* four fetters. A Sufi metaphor for the four elements – earth, fire, air and water – which make up the human body. As this body imprisons the soul, the four elements are called the 'four fetters *(chahār band)*'. Suhravardī describes this imprisonment by the 'four fetters', with the five physical senses *(ḥawāss)* and the five internal faculties of mind *(ḥawāss al-bāṭin)* standing guard:

> In the beginning, when the Creator wanted to create me, He made me a falcon.... Then, one day, hunters of divine fate and decree spread out a net of destiny, and put in it the bait of amity and attraction. In this way, they captured me. Thereafter, they sewed my two eyes closed, and tied me up with four different cords, and appointed ten people to be in charge of me, five of whom were facing me and five with their backs to me. I asked myself if it was ever to be that these four different bands be removed and the ten in charge would be heedless of me, so that I might fly in the air and be free from these fetters.
>
> *Shihāb al-Dīn Suhravardī, Majmū'ah Sivum-i Muṣannafāt, MSF p.225, in FLI p.299ff.*

See also: **arba' 'anāṣir**, **chahār ṭab'**.

chahār ṭab' (P) *Lit.* four *(chahār)* natures, qualities or temperaments *(ṭab'), viz.* heat, cold, dryness and wetness. Two of these natures *(ṭab')* are combined in each of the four elements *(arba' 'anāṣir)* – fire, air, water, earth – of which the physical creation is made. It is the interaction between these natures and the elements which brings about the constant change so evident in the material world. The principle of the four elements and the four natures forms part of the basis of traditional Islamic medicine.

Mystics advise rising above the level of the four temperaments:

> If you are within the four temperaments *(chahār ṭab‘),*
> without a doubt, you have the wrong temperament *(ṭab‘):*
> Four is never one!
>
> *‘Aṭṭār, Ilāhī-Nāmah, in FLTM4 p.9*

Life in this creation, with its restless and unsettled four elements, driven by the ever changing four natures, is like living under the rule of a tyrant. But Sanā’ī says that when faced with the tyranny of the "four natures", you should counter it with four repetitions of the saying, "God is great!" In other words, turn the mind to God rather than dwelling on negativity:

> Every time in the presence of the king of tyranny,
> blow four *takbīr* at the four natures *(chahār ṭab‘).*
>
> *Sanā’ī, Ḥadīqah al-Ḥaqīqah 10:264a, in MJR7 p.269*

See also: **arba‘ ‘anāṣir**, **al-ummahāt al-arba‘ah**.

chaitanya (S), **chetantā** (Pu) *Lit.* consciousness, intelligence, the soul, rationality. In *Vedānta, ātman* (soul or self) is considered identical to *Brahman,* and is regarded as the essence of all being and the source of all sensation. Hence, Shankara writes that the body, mind and senses all receive their energy from the consciousness:

> Drawing upon the consciousness of the soul *(ātmachaitanya),* the body, mind, senses and intellect are engaged in their respective activities, just as people depend upon the light of the sun.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 20*

The twentieth-century mystic, Sardār Bahādur Jagat Singh, similarly explains that the soul is a drop of the divine or super-consciousness *(mahā chetantā):*

> Our soul is *mahā chetantā,* a drop from the ocean of spirituality, life and energy. It is pure spirit. Yet in its association with mind and matter it has gathered all the dross, which is the cause of recurring woe and misery.
>
> *Sardār Bahādur Jagat Singh, Science of the Soul 1:5, SOS p.65*

See also: **ātman**, **chetanā**.

chakra (S/H), **chakkar** (Pu) *Lit.* wheel, centre, plexus; used as a symbol in Indian mystical expression, as in the *chakras* (centres of *prāṇa*) within the physical body, the *chaurāsī kā chakra* (wheel of eighty-four *lakhs*, of 8,400,000 species), and the *Brahmachakra* (wheel of *Brahman*) upon which everything created by *Brahman* 'revolves'.

The *chakras* of the physical body are organizational centres or focuses of *prāṇa* (subtle life energy, vital life force). *Prāṇa* interacts with the subtle forms of the five *tattvas* (elemental states of matter), like a wave flowing through water, creating a network of subtle organization. This subtle etheric 'web', created by *prāṇa* in the subtle tattvic energy fields, is sometimes called the etheric body. It is the organizational blueprint of the gross physical body.

In the physical body, the *prāṇa* forms five organizational centres or *chakras*, each one associated with one of the five *tattvas*. The sixth *chakra*, behind and above the two eyes, is known as the eye centre or *ājñā chakra*, and is the point of control over the five lower *chakras*. It is because of the apparently whirling movement that they have been called wheels.

The five *chakras* and their associated *tattvas* in the body below the eyes are as follows:

Chakra	***Position***	***Tattva***
Vishuddha	Throat	Ether, space *(ākāsha)*
Hṛidaya	Heart	Air *(vāyu* or *pavana)*
Maṇipūraka	Navel	Fire *(agni* or *tejas)*
Svādhishṭhāna	Genital	Water *(jala* or *pānī)*
Mūlādhāra	Rectal	Earth *(pṛithvī)*

The *chakras* are positioned within the spinal column, but in the realm of subtle tattvic energy, not gross matter. They cannot therefore be perceived by the normal physical senses.

The *chakras* are often described as lotuses or *kamalas*, each with a particular number of petals. The lotus is a frequent image used in Indian mysticism and, in this case, the 'petals' refer to the functions of the energies comprising each *chakra*. The *chakras* may be perceived within by the practice of certain kinds of yogic meditation. Mystics who teach the path of the Creative Word recommend that, since the *chakras* contain no spiritual forces but are only a part of physical human make-up, their disciples should begin at the sixth or *ājñā chakra*, and go up from there. Many yogis, however, have spent long periods gaining control of the five lower *chakras*, which dissolve at the time of death. Often, their highest reach is only the *ājñā chakra,* the starting point of higher mystics.

The six physical *chakras* are reflections of six centres in *aṇḍa* (the astral realm), which are themselves a reflection of six centres lying between *trikuṭī* (*lit.* three peaks, the highest region of the mind) and *sach khaṇḍ* (*lit.* true region, the eternal region). The physical universe is therefore a reflection of a reflection. The mystic Kabīr, speaking of the main centres as *sunnas,* has described this reflective process. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh has similarly described this system, calling the various centres *kamalas* or lotuses.

The *chakras* are sometimes referred to as microcosmic centres. This refers to the fact that the entire creation is 'formed' out of the being of God. The creation is an expression or manifestation of His being. A soul, with its coverings of mind and body, is a 'unit' of being and perception. It is by means of these 'units', interacting together – all sustained by the primal vibration of the Creative Word – that the creation continues in existence. Each 'unit' is a microcosm, a reflection of the macrocosm, by virtue of which it has the potential to perceive and interact with the entire creation.

Different beings are endowed with different microcosmic constitutions, enabling them to function in particular areas of the creation only. Man, alone, in the entire creation, is endowed with a complete microcosm. This is why he is said to be made in 'God's image'. As a consequence, only man has the power to fully know both God and His creation. He is therefore said to be the highest form in creation.

The physical universe consists of more than just the world observable through the gross physical senses. It has subtle aspects or planes which can be accessed through the six microcosmic centres or *chakras.* Saints of the highest order, however, advise that man should choose to explore his highest potential, that of God-realization, not his lower centres or *chakras,* and the planes accessible through them.

The higher mystics advise that one who is truly seeking liberation from birth and death, and desires God-realization or spiritual enlightenment, should not get involved in practices for awakening consciousness at the lower centres. They say that man's natural point of consciousness is already behind the eyes. It is unnecessary, therefore, for him to send his attention down to lower centres only to retrace his steps at a later date. However, since the various yogic paths of India all speak of the *chakras,* a number of Saints have described the lower centres, so that people may not feel that Saints are unaware of them. Kabīr and the nineteenth-century Indian mystic, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, have both described all the centres that lie within the human body, beginning with the six *chakras* of *piṇḍa.*[1]

Some schools of thought have spoken of seven *chakras* in the physical body, the seventh being the *sahasrāra* (thousand-spoked) or crown *chakra. Sahasrāra* is another name for *sahans dal kanwal,* the thousand-petalled lotus at the heart of the astral realm. Saints point out that the six *chakras* of *piṇḍa* are a part of physical life and are dissolved at the time of death. *Sahasrāra* and other higher centres, however, are not so dissolved. Therefore, although they lie – like God – within the human form, it is incorrect to class them along with the six lower centres because these higher centres are associated with the higher realms of creation. *Sahasrāra* is also described in some systems as the highest spiritual goal. Again, Saints would point out that *sahasrāra* is encountered at the very beginning of the path they describe.

See also: **aṇḍa** (4.1), **Brahmachakra** (5.2), **laṭā'if**, **prāṇa**, **tattva**.

1. *e.g.* Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, *Sār Bachan Poetry* 38:5.2–5, *SBP* pp.339–40; Kabīr, *Shabdāvalī* 1, *Bhed Bānī* 22:2–9, *KSS1* p.65.

chār antaḥkaraṇ (H) *Lit.* four *(chār)* internal modes of action *(antaḥkaraṇa);* the four faculties of the human mind.

See **antaḥkaraṇa**.

chār dal kanwal (H) *Lit.* four *(chār)* -petalled *(dal)* lotus *(kanwal);* a four-petalled lotus first arising in the upper part of *trikuṭī,* then reflected in the *antaḥkaraṇa,* and finally in the four-petalled rectal or *mūlādhāra chakra.*

See also: **aṇḍa** (4.1), **antaḥkaraṇa**, **chakra**.

chetan(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* conscious, awakened, spiritual, alive, animate, living, sentient; conscious as opposed to inert or inanimate *(jaṛ);* can also be a noun in some contexts, *e.g. chetana ākāsha* (the sky of consciousness). Mystics say that God is an ocean of life and consciousness. Consequently, the essence of the soul, being a particle of the Lord, is also pure consciousness. In itself, the soul is always conscious *(chetan),* but through its association with the mind and *māyā* in all their aspects, including material, inanimate or unconscious *(jaṛ)* things, it has lost awareness of its true estate. As the soul ascends on the Sound Current, its consciousness increases until, when it rises above the region of the universal mind, it knows itself as pure consciousness.

To become conscious or aware of the different levels of transcendent consciousness is something completely independent of the workings of the so-called intelligence or intellect *(buddhi).* It has nothing to do with intellectual knowledge and the perception of the exterior world by means of the senses *(indriyas),* but entails direct perception through the seeing and hearing faculties of the soul. Spiritual consciousness is not brought about by the senses and by intellect, but by the energies of the spirit. The highest degree of spiritual or absolute, divine consciousness is known as *chit,* as in the expression *sachchidānanda* (existence-consciousness-bliss).

Since the essence of mysticism is the enlargement of the individual's consciousness until the soul ultimately realizes its union with God, mystics have frequently spoken of consciousness. Ravidās says that consciousness originates from God:

> Only that one infinite Power,
>   who pervades the inner heart of all beings, is conscious *(chetan).*
> But in the company of *māyā,* it has become unconscious:
>   it has lost its pure form.
>
> *Ravidās, Bānī, SRB p.40*

See also: **chaitanya**, **chetanā**.

chetanā (S/H) *Lit.* consciousness; hence, spirit, soul, conscious life force, vitality, self, pure intelligence, wisdom, reason. In Indian mystical philosophy, consciousness is regarded as the source of all existence. In the *Upanishads* and Shankara's *Advaita Vedānta, chetanā* is the supreme Spirit, regarded as the essence of all being and the source of all sensation:

> He (the Supreme) is permanence among the permanent,
>   consciousness *(chetanā)* among the conscious,
>   beyond duality, yet fulfilling the desires of the many.
> He who – by means of *sānkhya* (knowledge) and *yoga* –
>   has known the luminous One, the supreme Cause,
>   is freed from all fetters.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 6:13*

God Himself is said to be an ocean of consciousness, as well as an ocean of life and light. 'Ināyat Khān observes:

> All scriptures have explained in some way or other that life is like light. In Muslim scriptures the word *nūr* (light) is used; in the *Vedānta* it is called *chetanā.*
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK4 p.82*

Mahārāj Sāwan Singh describes the essential nature of consciousness:

> A conscious being feels its consciousness itself, while in the case of an inert being, its existence is felt by others only. It is only the conscious being who feels the existence of the inert. Consciousness is for the conscious being himself, and the existence of the inert is for others.
>
> The qualities of the resultant are in accordance with the qualities of the cause. Consciousness can only come from consciousness. The soul is a particle of the Overlord (God).... The powers that exist in the soul also exist in the Lord. The soul is consciousness, and the Lord is the storehouse of consciousness. The soul is capable of thinking, and the Lord is an ocean of thoughts. The soul has intelligence and knowledge, and the Lord is the embodiment of knowledge and the treasure-house of intelligence. The soul is full of love, and the Lord is the source of all love. We are made in His image. Every particle is a part of the whole, and so are we....
>
> The Lord is the great storehouse of consciousness. He is the embodiment of reason and the treasure house of intelligence. He is the repository of love and compassion. We are parts of Him. He is the whole. The essence of which our soul is made, its fountain source is called the Lord. If we are a drop of consciousness, He is the ocean of consciousness. We are a ray of the essence of consciousness, and He is the sun of the essence of consciousness. Every particle is a part of the whole. Our real substance is a part of that whole which is called the Lord.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4, PM4 pp.10–11*

Using the allied term *chetanatā,* which implies states or conditions of consciousness, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh also writes that the soul and the creative Power, the *Shabd,* are both of the same essence – consciousness:

> The Word *(Shabd)* and the soul *(surat)* are from the same stream.
> They are the vital breath of the nameless Being.
> Know that all consciousness *(chetanatā)* springs from them:
> nothing exists without the Word *(Shabd).*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 9:3.3–4, SBP p.89*

See also: **chaitanya, chetana**.

chetan(a) ākāsh(a), chidākāsh(a) (S/H) *Lit.* sky *(ākāsha)* of consciousness *(chetan, chit);* the subtle realm lying between the eye centre *(do dal kanwal* or *ājñā chakra,* the topmost centre in *piṇḍa)* and the eight-petalled centre *(ashṭ dal kanwal)* in *aṇḍa;* in *Vedānta,* the realm of the all-pervading, absolute Consciousness *(Chit)* which is *Brahman.*

The manifestation of creation is such that each region is formed out of a 'sky *(ākāsha)*', or inner source, itself sustained from a higher level. *Chidākāsha* is the 'sky' of *piṇḍa,* the physical realm, which includes both the physical body and the apparently outer, material world. Within this subtle area of creation are to be found the human mind *(antaḥkaraṇa)* with all the *prārabdha* or fate *karma* held in seed form. It is from here that destiny, and hence the outward life of an individual, is manifested, through the mind.

Chidākāsha, or the 'sky' of the body, is also the source of all clairvoyant, telepathic, as well as other psychic and miraculous powers. These come, automatically, to one who passes through this region, but if the attention is distracted by them, further progress is impeded. The use of these powers can lead to a subtle sense of superiority and egotism, which hampers further spiritual advancement.

Chidākāsha is also the source of the physical *prāṇas* (subtle life energies). Consequently, those practitioners of *yoga* who focus attention upon the *prāṇas* within the lower bodily centres *(chakras),* and work their way upwards towards the source of the *prāṇas,* can proceed no further by that method than the *chidākāsha.* It is possible for them to continue further by concentrating upon the inner light *(jyoti).* But because *chidākāsha* is the creative source of all lower creation, it is also possible to be deceived into thinking that the light of this region is the Lord Himself.

One of the yogic texts that describes the raising of the *prāṇa* speaks of contacting this light of *chidākāsha,* and becoming absorbed there:

> The *yogī* should seat himself in the *padmāsana,* and fix his attention on the cavity of the throat; he should place his tongue at the base of the palate *(khecharī mudrā);* by this he will extinguish hunger and thirst.
>
> Below the cavity of the throat, there is a beautiful *nāḍī* (vessel) called *kūrma;* when the *yogī* fixes his attention on it, he acquires great concentration of the thinking principle *(chitta).*
>
> Holding his thought constantly at the third eye – the eye of *Shiva* – in the middle of his forehead, the *yogī* then perceives a fire, as brilliant as lightning. By contemplating on this light, all sins are destroyed, and even the most wicked person attains the highest end.
>
> If the experienced *yogī* meditates on this light day and night, he sees the *siddhas* (adepts) and can certainly converse with them.
>
> He who contemplates on *shūnya* (void, vacuum, space), while walking or standing, dreaming or waking, becomes altogether ethereal, and is absorbed in the *chidākāsha.*
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 5:43–47; cf. SSV pp.60–61*

If the soul passes through this region, rather than remaining absorbed there, it first perceives the inner light like that of the stars at night (as the concentration wavers), then like that of the sun (circular, like the end of a tunnel, and mentally 'dazzling' as the mind and soul become accustomed to it), and finally like that of the moon (peaceful and steady). After that, the soul passes into the region of the *ashṭ dal kanwal,* on the threshold of the astral realms.

Although the individual has reached the threshold of the astral regions, mind and *māyā* are still powerful. In fact, because the individual's mind is increasingly developing an inward tendency, it will sometimes project itself as a brilliant and luminous form. At this stage, the individual may feel, "I am That," "I am God," or "I am *Brahman,*" though there is still far to go before the soul finds God.

See also: **ākāsha**.

chetan aṃsh (H) *Lit.* conscious *(chetan)* part *(aṃsh);* the conscious essence; the soul or spirit; that which gives life, vitality and consciousness to the mind and body. Dharamdās says that the *chetan aṃsh* or soul wanders about, repeatedly taking birth in the *chār khāni,* the four categories into which living creatures are classified in traditional Indian thinking:

> The conscious essence *(chetan aṃsh)* of the Lord
> is wandering about in the *chār (khāni).*
> *Dharamdās, Shabdāvalī, Bhed 3:5, DDS p.29*

See also: **chār khāni** (6.3).

chidākāsh(a) (S/H) See **chetana ākāsha**.

chīng (jīng) (C) *Lit.* essence; procreative seed; one of the *sān pǎo* (three inner treasures) within each form of life, the other two constituents being *ch'ì* (breath, life force) and *shén* (spirit, consciousness). In many Taoist practices, the endeavour is to cultivate and preserve *chīng, ch'ì* and *shén* in order to create a sacred embryo *(shèng t'āi).* Through assiduous practices and purifications, it is believed that this sacred embryo will eventually grow and transform the practitioner into an immortal being *(Hsiēn).*

Chīng is the semen of men and menstruation in women, although *chīng* is also regarded as the essence of all bodily organs. In men, in particular, it is believed by Taoists that *chīng* should never be recklessly expended, for to do so will dramatically reduce one's vitality and life span. Proper diet, exercise and sleep also help to nourish and preserve *chīng*. When a child is conceived, it is believed that *chīng* is created first, then the brain and spinal column, followed by the rest of the body.

In addition to being a physical substance, *chīng* has a subtle form or energy within each human being. It is variations in the way it combines with *ch'ì* and *shén* that give each person his own unique character and vitality. The term *chīng shén* is used in common Chinese parlance to describe a person's physical and emotional vitality. If a person is depressed, lethargic and lacking enthusiasm, he is said to be deficient in *chīng shén*.

See also: **ch'ì**, **shén**.

ch'ì (qì) (C) *Lit.* breath, air, vapour. A key word in Chinese cosmology, referring to the vital force or life energy current which fills all beings and all creation, giving life and energy. According to Chinese folklore, at the time before creation began, all *ch'ì* was concentrated in the form of an egg known as *yüén ch'ì*, the original or primordial breath. At this stage, *yīn* and *yáng* (duality) were indistinguishable. When creation began, *ch'ì* expanded, with the lighter part rising to form Heaven and the heavier part sinking to form Earth. Further separation ultimately gave rise to the multiplicity of forms in creation or *wàn wù*, the ten thousand things.

In human beings, as in all creatures, *ch'ì* is the power or force which, in conjunction with spirit consciousness *(shén)*, infuses life. The body is dense *ch'ì* that has solidified, while the life force of the body is provided by purer, free-moving *ch'ì* present inside as breath. On a deeper level, however, *ch'ì* is vital energy circulating throughout the body giving it life. Although *ch'ì* expresses itself as life force in individual beings, its real nature is the cosmic vitality or energy that pervades all creation.

Within the body, *ch'ì* combines with *shén* (spirit, consciousness) and another element, *chīng* (body essence), to make up the 'three inner treasures *(sān pǎo)*'. It is believed by Taoists that these three vital elements need to be nourished and preserved through certain practices such as yogic breathing, physical exercises and meditation. Two such practices, *ch'ì kūng* (*lit.* breath practice) and *t'ài chí ch'uán* (*lit.* extreme limit fist, great ultimate boxing), conserve and balance the *wài ch'ì* (physical breath), thereby preserving health and extending life, as well as promoting mental equanimity. It is believed that if the physical breath is not conserved, the individual is prone to illness, becomes emotionally unbalanced, and can die prematurely.

On a more subtle level, preserving and nurturing the inner *ch'ì (nèi ch'ì)* – also through various exercises, including meditation – ultimately restores it to the pure state in which it was at the time of birth, eventually reconnecting it to its source in *yüén ch'ì*, the original or primordial breath. Regardless of the type of practice, the circulation of *ch'ì*, both in the body and in all of nature, is considered to be more favourable outdoors and during the early morning hours, as these circumstances promote a freer circulation of *ch'ì*.

In the *Tào Té Chīng*, Lăo Tzu indicates the pure childlike state that can be achieved by proper preservation of *ch'ì* in the body:

> One should carry the spiritual and sentient souls,
> and unite them as one.
> But can he keep them together?
> One should concentrate his vital forces *(ch'ì)*,
> and attain (a state of) pliancy.
> But can he assume the bearing of a child?
>
> *Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 10, LTTN p.85*

See also: **ch'ì** (5.2), **ether**, **prāṇa**, **yīn yáng** (5.2).

chit (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* consciousness; the divine consciousness of the soul; pure intelligence, spirit; the term is also used more generally to mean heart, mind, inner self, knowledge, thought, perception, intellect, understanding:

> He is the Source,
> the Cause that brings together (soul and body).
> He is indivisible, beyond the three aspects of time.
> Contemplating that worshipful Lord,
> who is possessed of all forms,
> who is the origin and truth of all things,
> who dwells in the heart *(chit)*,
> (attain final liberation).
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 6:5*

Chit is one of the three aspects of both the *ātman* (soul) and *Brahman*, according to the *Upanishads* and traditional *Vedānta*, these being *sat* (existence, reality, truth), *chit* (consciousness) and *ānanda* (bliss). Hence, the description of the *ātman* as *sachchidānanda* (reality-consciousness-bliss):

> The nature of the *ātman* is eternity, purity, reality *(sat)*, consciousness *(chit)* and bliss *(ānanda)*.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 24*

The term is used in a general sense by later Indian mystics:

By the Order *(Hukam)* of the infinite Lord,
  my mind *(chit)* is imbued with God.
Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 221, MMS

Forever unsteady is the restless mind:
  how can your inner self *(chit)* become clean?
Putting aside all other efforts,
  devote yourself to the practice of *surat Shabd.*
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 20:10.9–10, SBP p.161

See also: **antaḥkaraṇa**.

chitta (S/Pa/H) *Lit.* mind; more specifically, mind 'stuff', mind energy, mind 'material'; the inner energy of the human mind which gives it the means to move or be moved; hence, memory, the faculty of recollection; also, the faculty which discerns beauty, form and colour; inner attention; also, one of the four faculties of the *antaḥkaraṇa* (the subtle 'organ' comprising the human mind). A term with a spread of meaning, general and specific (like the English words 'mind' and 'consciousness'), depending on the context and the user.

More generally, *chitta* means individual consciousness, thought, attention, desire, intention and reasoning faculty. In the *Sānkhya* school of Indian philosophy, *chitta* is regarded as an aspect of the *mahat* (cosmic intelligence). In Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras, chitta* is the mind itself. Likewise, in Buddhist texts, *chitta* is a general term for the mind.[1]

In a specific sense, *chitta* is the faculty to store impressions and to recall them. All desires, cravings, thoughts, deeds, and everything that enters the mind through the senses *(indriyas),* make permanent impressions on the *chitta.* The impressions of all desires, wishes, thoughts and deeds are stored in the subconscious mind in seed form. Even when the body dies and disintegrates, the impressions stored in the *chitta,* now freed from the body, remain. These are known as *sanskāras* (impressions), which – like seeds – will bear fruit in a future life.

The human physical mind *(piṇḍī man)* is the means by which consciousness is expressed and experienced at the physical level. It is comprised of the four aspects, energies or faculties of the *antaḥkaraṇa,* these being: *manas* (mind, which receives information and responds internally), *buddhi* (intellect, which assesses information), *chitta* (which remembers), and *ahankāra* (which relates the information to the ego and initiates or suppresses action).

The word *chitta* is derived from the Sanskrit *chit,* meaning 'pure consciousness'. According to *Advaita Vedānta,* Reality or *Brahman* is said to have three aspects: *sat* (pure existence), *chit* (pure consciousness) and *ānanda* (pure bliss). When the individual human mind receives the reflection of the *chit* aspect of *Brahman,* it thereby becomes apparently conscious and intelligent, and is called *chitta.* This *chitta* is the medium through which the pure consciousness of Reality descends and functions in the manifested universe. It is the ground of all intellectual processes in human beings.

See also: **antaḥkaraṇa**, **chitta** (▸2).

1. For the more general meaning of *chitta,* see *A Treasury of Mystic Terms,* Part 2.

cholā (H/Pu) *Lit.* garment, vesture; esoterically, the physical body; sometimes as *purush cholā* (garment of man). Many mystics have referred to the physical form as a garment which is worn for a while and then discarded:

> Enjoy Lord's love, O dear one,
> so long as thou hast buoyant fresh youth.
> Few are thine days, thou hast grown weary,
> and thy vesture *(cholā)* has grown old.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 23, MMS*

> Your garment *(cholā)* is old and worn out:
> it may be torn to shreds at any moment.
>
> *Paltū, Bānī 1, Kuṇḍalī 46:1, PSB1 p.22*

See also: **robe**.

city A large or populous place, a place used for all aspects of human existence; a metaphor for the human form, used by mystics of many lands. In Plato's (*c.*427–347 BCE) well-known *Republic,* in which he discusses the characteristics of an ideal city-state, he points out that the city or state has the same characteristics as the individuals who comprise it:

> "Must we not acknowledge," I said, "that in each of us there are the same principles and habits which there are in the state; and that from the individual they pass into the state? How else can they come there?"
>
> *Plato, Republic 4:435e; DP2 pp.288–89*

Around seven centuries later, in the Nag Hammadi codices, in a passage from the *Teachings of Silvanus,* the writer describes the human form as a "city" that is to be defended by "soldiers" and "commanders" against the ingress of "robbers" and "wild beasts" – human passions and imperfections. They are not to be permitted entrance through the "gates" of the "city". The defence against these enemies, he says, is threefold. They are, firstly, the "instructions" – the principles upon which spiritual life is based; secondly, the "torches of the words" which illuminate the "gates" of the city – by which he means words that are repeated to hold the mind in concentration at the single eye; and thirdly, the *"Nous"* – the Mind, Intelligence or First Essence of God, His Word or Wisdom, the underlying and guiding principle behind all other principles. He writes:

> Acquire for yourself strength of mind and soul, and intensify the struggle against every folly of the passions of lust, and base wickedness, and love of praise, and fondness for contention, and tiresome jealousy, and wrath, and anger, and the desire of avarice. Guard your camp with weapons and spears. Arm yourself with the soldiers which are the words, with the commanders which are the instructions, and the *Nous* as your guiding principle.
>
> My son, throw every robber out of your gates. Guard all your gates with the torches of the words, and by these means you will bring peace to your life. But he who will not guard against these things will become like a city which is desolate, since it has been captured. All kinds of wild beasts have trampled upon it. For thoughts which are not good are evil wild beasts. And your city will be filled with robbers, and you will not be able to obtain peace, but only all manner of savage wild beasts. The Wicked One (Satan), who is a tyrant, is lord over these. While directing this, he (the Wicked One) is (hidden) beneath the great mire.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 84–85; cf. NHS30 pp.278–81*

The human passions and material tendencies of the mind and senses are explicitly described as "robbers" and "wild beasts", under the dominion and rule of the "Wicked One" or Satan. Yet while directing everything, he is concealed from all eyes "beneath the great mire" of this world, and very few people realize what is going on.

The writer goes on to speak of human weaknesses as the "enemies", describing the protection afforded by the "holy *Logos*", the "divine *Nous*" and "His Spirit" – all being terms for the divine creative power. Here, the "city" has become the "camp", though the meaning remains the same:

> Protect yourself lest you fall into the hands of your enemies. Entrust yourself to this pair of friends, the *Logos* and the *Nous,* and no one will be victorious over you. May God dwell in your camp (within you), may His Spirit protect your gates, and may the divine *Nous* protect the walls. Let the holy *Logos* become a torch in your mind, burning the wood which is the whole of sin.
>
> And if you do these things, O my son, you will be victorious over all your enemies, and they will not be able to wage war against you, neither will they be able to resist, nor will they be able to get in your way.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 86; cf. NHS30 pp.282–85*

The *Logos,* he says, is capable of burning or destroying sin. This is the way to protect the city of the body.

See also: **city of nine gates, wild animals** (▸2).

city of nine gates, city of ten gates Mystically, the human form. Many Indian mystics have described the body as a house or a city of nine (or ten) gates or doors *(nau dwār)* – there being nine sensory portals through which the attention can spread out into the world. These are the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth and the two lower apertures. The inner door, the eye centre or third eye, has consequently been called the tenth door or gate. Nine doors lead out while one leads within.

The metaphor also appears in two places in early Christian texts. The most definitive mention comes in a gnostic allegory found among the Nag Hammadi collection of texts. The story concerns a certain Lithargoel, symbolic of the Saviour, who invites Peter, the apostles and all the poor people of a certain place called "Habitation" to his own city. His purpose is to give them the "pearl of great price",[1] the treasure of spirituality. Everything in this story is symbolic, much as it is in other spiritual romances like the *Acts of Thomas,* and when Peter asks Lithargoel for the name of his city, the reply is metaphorical. Peter asks:

> "What is the name of the place to which you go, your city?"
>
> He said to me, "This is the name of my city, Nine Gates. And let us praise God that we are mindful that the tenth is (in) the head."
>
> *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles 6, NHS11 pp.216–17*

"Habitation" means this world, which souls inhabit, but where they do not permanently dwell. However, it is the realm where the Saviour, Lithargoel, finds his souls. The place to which he is taking them is the city of nine gates, within the body; and the gateway to this city lies in the head – the inner door.

The story continues, and the meaning is further clarified when the companions find themselves seated outside this gateway to Lithargoel's city:

> A great joy came upon us and a peaceful carefreeness like that of our Lord. We rested ourselves in front of the gate, and we talked with each other about that which is not a distraction of this world. Rather we continued in contemplation of the faith.
>
> *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles 8, NHS11 pp.220–21*

The writer is alluding to concentration of the attention at this inner gateway. "Great joy" and "peaceful carefreeness like that of our Lord" comes over them, and they keep their minds focused upon the inner reality, avoiding all distractions of this world.

The other reference to this metaphor is to be found in the *Acts of Thomas* in an episode where the soul, in human form, is being likened to a beautiful dancing girl at a marriage party. Each part of her body is given a symbolic meaning, among them being the observation that her ten "fingers point out the gates of the city" of the human form:

> The damsel is the daughter of light,
>   in whom consists and dwells
>   the proud brightness of kings.
> And the sight of her is delightful,
>   she shines with beauty and cheer....
> Her fingers point out the gates of the city.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 6; cf. ANT p.367*

It is difficult to say where the metaphor came from. Perhaps reference to the ten portals of the body was a common but secret part of Jesus' esoteric teachings. Nevertheless, its presence among the early Christian literature is intriguing. Maybe it arose spontaneously as a self-evident observation of human structure. However, the expression is found in the *Upanishads,* which were extant at that time. So, through Buddhist missionaries in Alexandria, as well as through contact along the Eastern trade routes to India, China and the Far East, Indian philosophy and expression could have reached the Middle East and the West. Also, some Middle Eastern mystics, such as the first-century Apollonius of Tyana are known to have visited the holy men of India and, through them, Indian terminology could have found its way back into the Middle East.

See also: **door** (▸2), **gates** (▸2), **nau dwār, purī**.

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1. *Matthew* 13:46, *KJV.*

consciousness Generally understood as the awareness of one's self, one's environment and one's own mental activity; being awake rather than asleep. The English philosopher, John Locke (1632–1704), defined consciousness as "the perception of what passes in a man's own mind".

In mysticism, especially the Eastern traditions, consciousness is understood as the essence of being, and is regarded as essentially the same as the soul. God is described as an ocean of consciousness or being, and the individual as a drop of that divine consciousness. The creation is considered to be a multilevel emanation or projection of the divine consciousness. The higher or heavenly realms of creation are regarded as planes or levels of consciousness, and the ascent of the soul into those regions is accomplished essentially through an expansion of consciousness. The heavenly regions are hence travelled not in space, but in being or consciousness.

Even without consciously entering the higher worlds, a person may experience an expansion of consciousness in which physical reality is suddenly seen with new eyes, as an expression of a far deeper divine Reality. Such experiences are commonly accompanied by a sense of deep joy or bliss, together with an enhanced perception of colours, sounds and so on. Such 'religious experiences' may last for a few minutes or a few hours, and are often life-changing in their long-term effects.

In the West, the investigation of consciousness has traditionally been by self-observation, self-analysis and a process of logical thinking. It is acknowledged, however, that the subjective nature of such analyses leaves all conclusions doubtful, since even trained observers have different interpretations of the same fundamental observations, even under identical laboratory conditions.

In the East, the exploration of consciousness has always been through specific meditation practices under the guidance of a qualified teacher or *guru,* the purpose being to expand the consciousness of the individual. Such meditation entails far more than the simple self-observation of mental activity. It includes control of the mind, and focusing of the attention at particular centres of consciousness within oneself. Many such practices are based on centuries or even millennia of investigation, and the philosophy associated with these practices often includes a detailed 'map' of the areas of consciousness under exploration. A high code of moral conduct – both outward and inward – is also a part of all such practices, since it is understood that purity of mind and expansion of consciousness are closely allied.

See also: **chaitanya**, **chetana**, **chetanā**.

counterfeit spirit The lower self, the human ego or the lower mind; the counterfeit self; terms used in some gnostic texts, notably the *Pistis Sophia* and the

Apocryphon of John. The expression is fitting, for by projecting itself as the ego or individual human self, the mind usurps the place of the soul, the real or higher self. By this masquerade, the individual is deceived into acting according to what he thinks will be to his own advantage when, in fact, the situation is exactly the reverse. Ego or the false self, the counterfeit spirit or mind that causes separation from God, is the primary 'weapon' of the negative power in the deceit of souls, for the very 'I' that acts in this world is the agent of that negative Power. This is why Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil."[1] This is the human situation.

Even knowing and understanding intellectually that the soul is the real self does not prevent an individual from considering him or herself to be the identity presented by the mind. Not until a soul has become entirely free from the mind, by going above the universal mind or the seat of the negative power, will the soul attain true self-realization, knowing itself as pure soul. It is here that the soul regains its pure robe of glory, its celestial garment or raiment of light, according to the metaphor of the ancient Middle East.

In the *Pistis Sophia,* Mary Magdalene asks Jesus, "Who compels men until they commit sin?" It is a good question, and Jesus explains that a human being is comprised of the "Power", the "soul", and the "counterfeit spirit", all three being bound together in a physical body. The "Power" is the Creative Word, and the "soul" is the drop of that Power that is either pulled upwards by the Word or dragged down by the "counterfeit spirit", the mind with its material desires and tendencies. Of these three elements in the human constitution, Jesus says:

> Each one of them perceives according to his nature. The Power perceives in order to seek the light of the Height. The soul, on the other hand, perceives in order to seek the region of righteousness which is mixed, which is the region of commixture. The counterfeit spirit however seeks all evil and desires all sins. The body does not itself perceive anything unless its material substance receives power (from these three).
>
> *Pistis Sophia 282:111; cf. PS pp.564–65, PSGG p.235*

The "region of righteousness which is mixed" and the "region of commixture" probably refer to the intermediate heavenly realms, which are subtle and spiritual compared to the physical universe, but where the pure soul is still mixed with the mind. In gnostic terminology, these are the realms of the *archons,* the heavenly rulers subordinate to the Demiurge or creator of the lower realms, including this world. 'Righteousness' here, as in many other places in the ancient literature, would be better translated as 'holiness' or 'spirituality'. To begin with, the soul, associated with the mind, yearns only for the more spiritual atmosphere of the higher realms, even if they are still within the domain of the *archons*. But the counterfeit spirit "seeks all evil and desires all sins": the lower, human mind seeks materiality and sin.

Jesus then explains:

> And the Power within moves the soul to seek after the place of the Light and the whole Godhead. And the counterfeit spirit inclines the soul and compels it to commit all its iniquities, with all its passions and all its sins continually. And it remains allotted to the soul, and it is hostile to it and causes it to commit all these wicked things and all these sins....
>
> Moreover, if it comes to rest by night or by day, it moves it with dreams or with desires of the world, and it causes it to desire everything of the world. In a word, it incites it to all things which the *archons* (rulers) have commanded for it. And it becomes hostile to the soul, causing it to do what it does not wish. Now at this time, Maria, this is the enemy of the soul, and it is this which compels it until it commits sins of every kind.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 283:111; cf. PS pp.566–69, PSGG p.236*

The soul is pulled towards the world by the mind and is drawn towards God by the "Power within", the Spirit. Even when a person is resting or dreaming, the counterfeit spirit continues to project desires of the world before them.

Jesus' reply continues at length, but in essence, he says that the soul goes on in this way until the time of death, all its sins being witnessed by the "retributive ministers", the administrators of the *archons* in the "realm of commixture". Or one can say that all the deeds of the soul are witnessed by the mind itself and cause impressions upon the mind. Then, at the time of death, the soul is taken by "retributive receivers", is judged, and is allotted a place accordingly, the sinful soul being punished in hell. Jesus then points out that at this stage the counterfeit spirit itself becomes the guide of the soul; the soul is forced to go where the mind leads it:

> And the counterfeit spirit becomes the receiver of the soul, being assigned to it and transferring it (the soul) according to the chastisement (due to it) on account of the sins which it has caused it to commit. And it has great hostility towards the soul.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 284:111; cf. PS pp.568–69, PSGG p.237*

Subsequently, after its "chastisement" in hell is over, the soul is brought before *Heimarmenē* (*lit.* apportioned), a name used by the fifth-century (BCE) Greek philosopher, Empedoclēs, for the goddess in charge of the processes of transmigration and the apportioning of appropriate destinies.[2] The soul is then handed over to her "receivers" or helpers and is

> cast … into a body which is worthy of the sins which it has committed. And verily I say unto you that she does not release that soul from the changes of the body before it has completed its last cycle, according to its due.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 285:111; cf. PS pp.570–73, PSGG p.238*

Jesus concludes this description by echoing the words from St Matthew, "Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing"[3] – an allusion which demonstrates the meaning these early Christians gave to this saying of Jesus.

The inner journey of a soul who "receives the mysteries of the light (initiation)", and has not fallen a prey to the counterfeit spirit during its physical lifetime is then described. In this extract, the accumulated sins of the soul, those which have been stored up from innumerable past lives within the mind, but have so far received no opportunity for expression as the destiny of a physical lifetime, are referred to collectively as the "destiny". Jesus says:

> Moreover, if there is a soul which has not listened to the counterfeit spirit in all his works, and becomes good and receives the mysteries of the light … when the time of the coming forth of that soul from the body is completed, the counterfeit spirit follows after that soul. It, with the destiny (*i.e.* the impressions of past *karma*), follows after it on the path on which it is to go to the Height. And before it can betake itself into the Height, it (the soul) says the mystery of the releasing of the seals and all the bonds of the counterfeit spirit with which the *archons* bound it (the counterfeit spirit) to the soul. And when they are said, the bonds of the counterfeit spirit are released, it ceases to come into that soul, and it releases the soul….
>
> Now when it happens that the soul says the mystery of the releasing of its seals and all the bonds of the counterfeit spirit, it (the counterfeit spirit) ceases entering into the soul and ceases being bound to it. And at the (same) time it (the soul) says a mystery, and releases the destiny to its place in the presence of the *archons* which are on the way of the midst. And it says the mystery, and releases the counterfeit spirit … to the place in which it was bound to it.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 286:112; cf. PS pp.572–75, PSGG pp.238–39*

When the time comes for an initiated soul who has not been led astray by the counterfeit spirit to leave the body, which may be either during spiritual practice or at the time of physical death, the mind or counterfeit spirit goes along with the soul as it ascends towards God, the Height. On the journey, there comes a point where the mind, together with its encrusted "destiny", are "released" or left behind. They return to their place of origin, the *archons* whence they came. "It says a mystery" means that the soul has the divine password of the Word, which opens all the doorways to the Height that lies above the realm of the mind, above the realm of the *archons*. This is the 'open sesame' which carries a soul through all barriers and gateways on the inner ascent. The soul then becomes free and naked, glowing with its own great radiance:

> And, in that moment, it (the soul) becomes a great outpouring of light, shining exceedingly. And the retributive receivers which have brought it forth from the body are afraid at the light of that soul, and they fall upon their faces. And, in that moment, that soul becomes a great outpouring of light and becomes entirely winged with light, and penetrates all the regions of the *archons* and all their orders of light, until it goes to the region of its (eternal) kingdom.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 287:112; cf. PS pp.574–75, PSGG p.239*

The "retributive receivers" who had at one time caused the soul such great distress, casting it into hell and into body after body, are now in awe of the pure soul's splendour and its innate glory. Now the soul is so powerful that its consciousness "penetrates all the regions of the *archons* and all their orders of light". The soul has a greater power than all the *archons* or rulers and administrators. The soul's enlightenment gives it knowledge of all the domains of the *archons:*

> And that soul dismisses their destiny to them, saying: "Receive back your destiny; I do not come to your regions from this time (onwards): I have become a stranger unto you forever, being about to go to the region of my inheritance...."
>
> And it says to them: "There, take your counterfeit spirit; I do not come to your regions from this time onwards; I have become a stranger to you forever."
>
> *Pistis Sophia 289:112; cf. PS pp.578–81, PSGG p.241*

And the soul dismisses the counterfeit spirit and its associated "destiny" or stored sin, saying that it will now no longer be returning to their realms, that it is going onwards to the eternal realm to claim its rightful "inheritance".

In this narrative, Jesus is telling the story of the liberation of the soul from the grip of the counterfeit spirit (the mind), from the realms of the *archons*, and from the accumulated sins of countless past lives.

1. *John* 8:44.
2. Porphyry, in Stobaeus, *Anthology* I:49.60, *SDMG* pp.54–55.
3. *Matthew* 5:26.

dal(a) (S/H) *Lit.* petal, as of a flower. The energy centres that comprise the 'backbone' of creation and through which the creation is manifested, such as the six *chakras* in the human body, are often described in the symbolic language of Indian mysticism as lotuses *(kanwal)* with a particular number of petals *(dal)*. These 'petals' refer to the functional aspects or subtle energies comprising or associated with these numerous centres. Hence, for example, the *chār dal kanwal* (four-petalled lotus) of the *antaḥkaraṇa* is described in terms of its four faculties, and the thousand energy currents which come together at the heart of the astral realm is called the *sahans dal kanwal* (the thousand-petalled lotus).

See also: **aṇḍa** (4.1), **antaḥkaraṇa**, **sahans dal kanwal** (4.1).

darajāt al-suflá, al- (A), **darajāt-i siflī**, **darajāt-i suflī** (P) *Lit.* the lower *(al-suflá)* degrees, steps, stages or ranks *(darajāt)*, *suflá* being the feminine of *asfal* (lower, lowest, lowest part, bottom); six subtle energy centres located in the physical body between the forehead and the rectum, also known to Sufis as the *laṭā'if* (sg. *laṭīfah*). Variously named by different Sufi orders, these six *laṭā'if (laṭā'if-i sittah)* are reflections of six *laṭā'if* in the higher realms, known as *al-darajāt al-'ulwīyah* (*lit.* the higher degrees).

See also: **chakra**, **laṭā'if**.

deh(a) (S/H/Pu), **dehī** (H/Pu) *Lit.* body; the body of any species. Mystics say that the human body is the only form in creation through which the soul can escape the realm of birth and death, and find God:

> Spring does not come repeatedly.
> Now, therefore, that you have been blessed
>   with a human body *(deh)*,
>   let not the opportunity pass by in vain.
> Sow the seed of devotion in the field of your heart.
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Mishrit Pad, Rāg Basant 2:1–2, SBB p.54*

> Within the body *(dehī)* abides the Lord's Name *(Nām)*.
> Of Himself, the Creator-Lord is imperishable:
>   the soul dies not, nor can it be slain.
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1026, MMS*

Mystics point out that human birth is a rare *(durlabh)* opportunity. *Durlabh* means rare, scarce, difficult to obtain, excellent or unique. Hence, the expressions *durlabh deh* and *durlabh tan* (rare body) are used to describe the human form, which is rare in the sense that souls are incarnated in the bodies of so many other species, rarely in a human body:

This rare body *(durlabh tan)* you have received
after wandering for millions of lives;
Do not waste it aimlessly:
apply yourself to devotion every moment.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 16:1.1–2, SBP p.127

See also: **kāyā**, **nar deh**, **nar nārāyaṇī deh**, **tan**.

demut (He), **dyukana** (Ar) *Lit.* image, likeness.

See **ẓelem**.

diadem, diadem of light, diadem of sovereignty A diadem is a light royal crown, especially a jewelled circlet, worn on the head, often across the brow. In Judaic, early Christian, and especially Manichaean literature, the diadem symbolizes the true nature of the soul, since the spiritual treasure that lies within the head is obtained after focusing all the attention within the forehead at the single eye. Manichaean and Mandaean texts often symbolize the soul's innate nature of light as the acquisition of a royal robe or garment of light, a crown or garland especially of living flowers, and a diadem. A Manichaean text, for example, addresses the soul:

Then shall you receive, at the end,
helm, garland and diadem from the God *Ormazd,*
the Father, within the paradise of light.
There shall you rejoice and prosper forever,
and be happy in gladness.
Manichaean Hymns, MM2 p.333, MHCP p.17

Similarly:

Your Father, the First Man, will give you … Life.…
The divine Envoy of Truth will give you the diadem of light,
… will give you your garland of renown.
Manichaean Psalm Book CCXXVII; cf. MPB p.22

In another psalm, the Saviour himself promises the soul:

I shall take (you) eagerly and soar up upon wings,
high over all the (dark) powers and rebellious princes.
I shall lead (you) into the primeval calm of that land....
You shall rejoice in gladness, in blissful praises;
You shall be without grief....
You shall put on a radiant garment and gird on light,
and I shall set upon your head the diadem of sovereignty.
Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān VIc:1–4; cf. MHCP pp.100–1

Another psalm is a paean of praise from the soul to God and Saviour:

May the radiant God of the realm of light
be blessed with great blessing!
You are my beloved, God of the realm of light:
merciful God, save me! ...

You are longed for among the (spiritually) poor,
for you give salvation:
The treasure of jewels that you collect is theirs.
At all times, do you lead your sons upwards.

You are the Sovereign who gives as a gift
the diadem, the banner and the white sign.
You indeed are the merciful Sovereign:
show mercy and grace to me also.
Manichaean Hymns, MM3 p.883, RMP bk; cf. GSR pp.57–58:4, ML pp.138–39

See also: **Crown** (2.1), **jewels** (4.2), **Keter** (2.1).

dih (P) *Lit.* village; location. The Sufis use the metaphor of a village for the body, emphasizing that it is a place for the spirit to sojourn for a period, not a permanent place to dwell.

See also: **city of nine gates, purī.**

dvādas dal kanwal (H) *Lit.* lotus *(kanwal)* of twelve *(dvādas)* petals *(dal);* an alternative name for the *hṛidaya chakra,* the subtle heart centre, where – according to Kabīr – yogis repeat the word *'sohang'* as a *mantra* to focus the attention:

At the heart is the twelve-petalled lotus *(dvādas dal kanwal),*
where *Shiva* sits in deep meditation.

There the word *'sohang' (sohang shabd).*
is the pervasive refrain *(dhun),*
and the *gaṇas* (*Shiva*'s attendants) sing in praise.
Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Bhed Bānī 22:6, KSS1 p.65

The six *chakras* of *piṇḍa* are reflections of six centres in *aṇḍa*. Consequently, other centres in the higher regions are sometimes also referred to as the *dvādas dal kanwal.*

See also: **so'ham** (4.1).

eternal life See **life eternal**.

ether (Gk. *aithēr*) Also spelled aether; a subtle, invisible and highly elastic form of matter, first postulated in the seventeenth century, and believed to permeate all apparently empty space, including the spaces between particles of matter, and whose vibrations constitute light and other electromagnetic radiation; in ancient astronomy, the substance believed to fill all space beyond the sphere of the moon; in Greek mythology, the clear sky, the upper regions of the atmosphere beyond the clouds; usually understood to be derived from the Greek *aithō* (I burn), although Plato derives the word from the perpetual motion of the ether.[1]

In the physics of the seventeenth century and later, a number of ethers were postulated as the media for a variety of phenomena, including a medium in which planets could move and be supported, the substance of electric atmospheres and magnetic effluvia, the conveyance of sensations from one part of the body to another, and the propagation of light. Even Isaac Newton believed that gravitation arose from different pressures in the ether, although he never published his theory since he was unable to furnish any experimental proof. Philosophers who believed in nature's abhorrence of a vacuum also regarded the existence of an ether as an essential philosophic principle, the something that filled otherwise empty space.

During the eighteenth century, the proliferation of speculative theories concerning various ethers resulted in the development of a prejudice against the concept in the minds of more conservative thinkers, a bias which still persists. However, although twentieth-century science largely dismissed theories of the ether, the underlying concept has not entirely disappeared. Space – 'empty' or otherwise – is now described as the 'quantum vacuum', understood as a seething and highly energetic mass of 'virtual' particles that come in and out of existence at extremely high speeds.

Despite the rejection of the concept by modern science, various occult and esoteric philosophies, such as theosophy, have continued to embrace the idea of an ether as the fundamental substance of material existence. In late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century alternative thought, ideas concerning the ether have been augmented by oriental concepts such as the Indian *ākāsha* and the Chinese *ch'ì,* and are often linked with theories of the quantum vacuum in speculations concerning the manifestation of the physical universe and the subtle processes governing the maintenance and organization of physical bodies.

See also: **ākāsha**, **athīr** (4.1), **ch'ì**.

1. Plato, *Cratylus* 410b.

etheric body The subtle aspect of the physical body through which the subtle life energies *(prāṇa)* flow, bringing order and organization to the material comprising the gross body.

See also: **ākāsha**, **body of wind**.

everlasting life See **life eternal**.

Gaṇesh chakra (H) *Lit.* wheel or centre *(chakra)* of *Gaṇesh;* the rectal or *mūlādhāra chakra.*

See **mūlādhāra chakra**.

gaṛh (H/Pu) *Lit.* citadel, fortress, fort, stronghold, headquarters; metaphorically, the body, within which the individual has to wage a spiritual war, wresting power from the mind who presently rules, and reinstating or finding the true king – the Lord. In one of his poems, Kabīr depicts the present "lord of the fortress" as the mind. Scaling the fortress refers to the ascent of the soul from the lower part of the body to the divine eternity within:

Taking with me truth and contentment,
I began to fight, and battered both its gates.
Associating with the Saints and by the *Guru*'s grace,
I captured the king the fortress *(gaṛh).*

> Taking with me the army of God's warriors and,
> through the power of the Lord's meditation (*simran*, remembrance),
> I have snapped the noose of fear of death.
> Kabīr, the Lord's slave has mounted the fortress *(gaṛh)*,
> and obtained an imperishable empire.
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 1161–62, MMS*

Gulāl Sāhib says it more simply:

> Let truth and contentment
> dwell in the fortress *(gaṛh)* of your body;
> Let your soul be attached to the Name *(Nām)*.
>
> *Gulāl Sāhib, Bānī, Shabd 13:3, GSB p.5*

Kabīr also uses the metaphor for God's own eternal dwelling:

> The Lord constructed an unparalleled and unreachable fortress *(gaṛh)*
> for His residence, wherein shines His light.
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 1162, MMS*

garland A wreath or chain of flowers, foliage, etc., often worn around the head or neck. The true spiritual estate of the soul in ancient Middle Eastern mystic expression was often described as the soul's garland, wreath or robe. The term garland is especially common in Manichaean texts. Speaking of the souls in the heavenly realms, one poet writes:

> Their verdant garlands never fade:
> they are wreathed brightly, in numberless colours.
> Heaviness and drooping do not exist in their bodies,
> and paralysis does not affect any of their limbs.
> Heavy sleep never overtakes their souls,
> deceptive dreams and delusions are unknown among them.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān I:22–24, MHCP pp.68–69*

And:

> Their fragrant garlands are sacred and immortal:
> their bodies are full of living pure drops.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān Vc:1, MHCP pp.92–93*

Among the Coptic psalms, the expression occurs repeatedly:

> The garland of glory, he set upon my head,
> the prize of victory, he set in my hand,
> he clothed me in the robe of light....
> I rejoice as I ascend to my Father
> with whom I have conquered in the land of the darkness;
> O my great King, ferry me to the city of the gods, the angels.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLIII, MPB p.50*

garment See **robe**.

geush urvā (Av) *Lit.* soul *(urvā)* of life *(geush);* the living soul; soul. In one of his *Gāthās,* Zarathushtra relates a story in which the various aspects of the supreme Lord converse with Him concerning the pleas for help that have risen up from the living soul *(geush urvā).* The narrative begins with *geush urvā* complaining to *Geush Tashā* (Creator of Life) about her plight in this world, describing the suffering, ill will and general disarray by which she is surrounded, and asking why she has been created.

Although scholars have debated the matter, it seems clear from a mystical point of view that *Geush Tashā* here means the same as *Ahurā,* the Lord of Life, the different term being used because of the context, to contrast with *geush urvā.*

In the later Zoroastrian religion, the aspects of *Ahurā Mazdā* and the other characters in this allegory came to be taken as deities and spirits that were worshipped in a religious manner. But there is no indication that Zarathushtra intended them to be taken as literal personages or spirits. It was only his way of expression. The beginning of the parable reads:

> To God, the living soul *(geush urvā)* complained:
> "For what reason did you give me birth? Who fashioned me?
> Anger *(aēshmā),* pillage, aggression everywhere,
> and violence enmesh me all around;
> For me, no protection can there be, but Yours.
> Therefore, reveal to me an exit
> through a great Saviour *(vohū Vāstrya).*"
>
> Thereupon the Creator of Life *(Geush Tashā)* asked *Ashā* (Truth):
> "Who shall the Saviour *(Ratu)* be for this earth (life),
> so that we may offer her, besides protection, fostering zeal?
> Whom do you desire to be her lord and guide?
> Who shall repel passion *(aēshmā)*
> and all the hosts of Untruth *(Druj)?*"
>
> *Zarathushtra, Yasna 29:1–2; cf. DSZ pp.33, 40*

In the allegory, Zarathushtra is then appointed as the Saviour to relieve the suffering of the soul, and bring her back to God.

In another of the *Gāthās,* Zarathushtra prays that solace may be brought to his *geush urvā* (living soul) through the divine *Spentā Mainyu* (Holy Spirit) and *Vohu Manō* (Primal Mind, the creative Power):

> With humble hands raised in adoration, *Mazdā,* this I pray: …
> Firstly, for perfect bliss, to Your Holy Spirit *(Spentā Mainyu);*
> Then, for wisdom, to Your Primal Mind *(Vohu Manō);*
> Thus will solace to my living soul *(geush urvā)* be brought.
> *Zarathushtra, Yasna 28:1; cf. DSZ p.89*

And in another, he recommends working for the benefit of "one's own living soul *(geush urvā)*":

> Lifelong dedication to purity is best for man:
> For one's own living soul *(geush urvā)* should one toil,
> carefully fostering her, until she reach the Light.
> *Zarathushtra, Yasna 48:5; cf. DSZ p.668*

See also: **soul, rūḥ, urvā**.

ghar (H/Pu) *Lit.* house, home; figuratively, the human body, since the soul and mind make their temporary home in the body, within which God and His entire creation can be found:

> The house *(ghar)* is loaded with many gems, rubies and emeralds,
> but the wandering mind can find them not.
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 1179, MMS*

> Everything is within the home *(ghar),* not even one is without:
> he who seeks without is lost in doubt.
> By *Guru*'s grace, he who has found the Lord in his mind
> is comfortable (at peace) within and without.
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 102, MMS*

The term is also used to mean the true home of the soul with God, providing the opportunity for a play on the word:

> Within the house *(ghar),* the *Guru* shows the home *(ghar),*
> and tells the secret of the five melodies.

Fix your attention on the Melody,
  and go from this house *(ghar)* to that house *(ghar)*.
That house *(ghar)* is inaccessible *(agam)* and beyond reach *(apār)*.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 20:10.3–5, SBP p.161

See also: **house**.

ghaṭ (H/Pu) *Lit.* a large earthenware water jar, a clay water pot, a pitcher, a vessel; metaphorically, the body as an easily broken vessel, made of clay; also, mind, heart, soul, inner self. Mystics say that God is to be found within:

You live within every heart *(ghaṭ)*,
  but I do not know how to find You.
You are all goodness and I am the reverse,
  yet I am never grateful for what You do.
Ravidās, Shrī Sant Rohidās, Pad 13:3, SSR p.127

As fragrance abides in the flower
  and as reflection in the mirror *(mukur)*,
  so does God dwell within thee:
And search thou Him within thy heart *(ghaṭ)*, O brother.
Guru Tegh Bahādur, Ādi Granth 684, MMS

That which I sought everywhere without,
  I have found within my own body *(ghaṭ)*.
Ravidās, Shrī Sant Rohidās, Pad 31:5, SSR p.145

Your Lord dwells within your own body *(ghaṭ)*:
  why open your outer eyes?
Says Kabīr: listen, dear friends,
  I found the Lord behind the (third) eye (*til, lit.* spot).
Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Virah aur Prem 2:5–6, KSS1 p.7

Kabīr also says that nobody wants to claim a dead body as their own:

As long as the oil and the wick are in the lamp,
  till then everything is visible.
When the oil is burnt,
  the wick goes off and forlorn becomes the mansion.
O madman, then none keeps thee even for a moment:
  remember thou, therefore, the Name of that Lord *(Rām Nām)*.

> Say, whose is the mother and whose the father,
> and which man has a wife?
> When the pitcher *(ghaṭ)* bursts, none cares for thee:
> all say, "Take him out, take him out."
> Sitting on the threshold,
> the mother weeps and the brothers take away the bier cot.
> Spreading her tresses of hair,
> the wife bewails, and the soul departs all alone.
> Says Kabīr, hear, O ye Saints, regarding the terrible ocean:
> This man suffers torture,
> and death's myrmidon (*Jam,* lord of death) leaves him not,
> O Lord of the world.
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 477–78, MMS*

See also: **maṭkā**.

gudā chakra (S/H) *Lit.* anus *(gudā) chakra.* See **mūlādhāra chakra**.

guphā (H/Pu) *Lit.* cave, cavern, vault, retreat or hiding place; figuratively, the human body. Guru Amardās speaks of the "inexhaustible treasure" that is hidden within the 'cave' of the body:

> Within this cavern *(guphā),* there is an inexhaustible treasure:
> in it abides the unseen and illimitable Lord.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 124, MMS*

He also speaks of the divine Music and Breath – the Creative Word – the essence of the soul which brings life to the body. The "nine doors" are the nine sensory outlets, while the "tenth" leads to the inner spiritual highway:

> Placing the soul in the body-cave *(guphā),*
> the Lord began to blow the musical instrument of Breath into it.
> He blew the musical instrument of breath,
> made the nine doors manifest:
> And the tenth He has kept concealed.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 922, MMS*

gyānendriya (H) See **jñānendriya**.

ḥāfiẓah (A/P) *Lit.* memory; one of the five *ḥawāss-i bāṭin* (internal faculties of the mind).

See also: **ḥawāss al-bāṭin**.

haṃs(a), **haṃsī**, **haṃsikā** (S/H/Pu), **haṃsnī** (H/Pu) *Lit.* goose; by poetic licence, a swan; a sacred bird of ancient India and a vehicle of *Brahmā;* sometimes transliterated as *hansa*. The Sanskrit *haṃsa* also refers to the duck and flamingo. *Haṃsnī, haṃsī* and *haṃsikā* are the feminine forms.

Haṃsa is used as an epithet for the soul, either as the *jīva* (embodied soul), incarnate in this world or as the pure soul who dwells in higher realms. *Haṃsa* is also used as a name for *Brahman*, for the deities *Shiva, Vishṇu* and *Kāmadeva*, for one of the *prāṇas* (subtle life energies), for the sun, for an ascetic of a particular order, and in a number of other instances. In the *Chhāndogya Upanishad,*[1] the deity of fire *(Agni)* appears as a *haṃsa* to instruct the aspirant Satyakāma concerning the nature of *Brahman*.

As a mythical bird, the *haṃsa* is reputed to live on pearls *(motī)* and be able to separate milk from water, symbolizing the purity of the soul and its innate ability to discriminate between Reality and *māyā* (illusion). The *haṃsa* and its feminine form, *haṃsnī,* are probably used as metaphors for the pure soul because the *haṃsa* is pure white in colour.

The high spiritual attainment of a pure soul has also been described as *haṃsa-gatī* (the state of a swan), while souls that have reached *sat lok* (true place, eternity) are sometimes called *paramhaṃsas,* or supremely pure souls. *Paramahaṃsa,* often anglicized as *Paramhansa,* is also a title of respect, used especially for many of India's holy men, whatever their degree of spirituality.

Though commonly translated as 'swan' by Western commentators, there is some doubt as to whether the mythical *haṃsa* is actually modelled on a swan or a white goose. In translation from the English, goose is generally rendered as *haṃsa* and the swan is the *rāja haṃsa,* the royal *haṃsa.* However, as a mythical bird, the white and stately swan probably has more of a mythological background. It was also reverenced in ancient Greece and Rome, being sacred to Venus and Apollo.

In the *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad,* the *Haṃsa* symbolizes *Brahman* or the supreme Self or Reality:

> At the centre of this universe
>   is the one supreme Self *(Haṃsa)....*
> Only by knowing Him can death be overcome:
>   there is no other way of doing so.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 6:15*

The *Haṃsa,* however, has become individualized as the embodied soul or *jīva:*

The *Haṃsa,* the ruler of the entire universe,
of all that moves and moves not,
moves outward, becoming embodied
in the city of nine gates (the body).
Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 3:18

In this vast wheel of *Brahman (Brahmachakra),*
in which all things live and die,
the soul *(haṃsa)* is tossed about,
so long as it regards the self as separate from the Mover.
(Only) when blessed by Him, does it attain immortality.
Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 1:6

In the writings of the Saints, *haṃsa* is used in a similar way. Because of its migratory habits, it symbolizes the soul who is a stranger in the physical realm, migrating from body to body with the seasons of life and death. Consequently, it is an epithet of the soul incarnate in this world:

In the unbaked earthen pot, the water remains not:
when the soul-swan *(haṃs)* departs, the body withers away.
Kabīr, Ādi Granth 792, MMS

The ocean of existence is fathomless:
you cannot see its other end.
But the Master comes to save the souls *(haṃsas):*
only he can take you away from it.
Dharamdās, Shabdāvalī, Shabd 5:3, DDS p.2

The mythological *haṃsa,* whose food is pearls and is able to separate milk from water, is contrasted with the black Indian crow *(kāg),* a greedy and gregarious scavenger that eats any kind of rubbish it can find, symbolizing the soul in this world. Spiritual realization is symbolized as the transformation of the black crow into the white *haṃsa:*

On meeting a Master,
you become a different person.
Discarding the behaviour of a crow,
become a *haṃs* and reach your long-lost home.
Sahajobāī, Bānī, Guru Mahimā 42, SBB p.9

In the company of a Saint,
the crow becomes a *haṃs.*

Giving up both good and bad food (relinquishing duality),
it selects only pearls to eat.
Sahajobāī, Bānī, Sādh Mahimā 10, SBB p.12

The same is said of the feminine form, *haṃsnī:*

O *haṃsnī,* separate milk from water.
Discard the water, drink pure nectar,
and remain forever satisfied.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 20:20.1, SBP p.165

The *haṃsnī* collects the pearls of *Shabd:*
only a rare *gurumukh* can do this.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 38:2.8, SBP p.355

Souls who can ascend beyond the universal mind have learned to separate milk from water in the sense that their discrimination and direct mystic perception have become so finely tuned that they can perceive the Reality in the illusion. They are not deceived by the play of *māyā;* they see the Lord in creative manifestation, where others only see the physical world or some other region of the mind. The use of the pearl – the mythological food of the *haṃsa* – as a metaphor for the soul or the creative Power is common in mystic literature, especially that of the Middle East.

Saints have also used the term *haṃsa* to refer to those pure souls who inhabit the spiritual realms beyond the reach of the universal mind. Such *haṃsas* are often described as living on the shores of *mānsarovar,* a 'lake' of *amṛit* or pure spirit, in which the soul bathes, shedding the impurities of its past involvement with the lower creation. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes of the soul's arrival in these spiritual regions, the first of which he calls "*sunn* (void)":

I have reached the shores of *sunn.*
Having become a *haṃsa,*
I collect pearls day and night.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 9:8.7, SBP p.93

And in a description of the inner realms, he writes:

The soul bathes in lake *mānsarovar,*
and joins the group of *haṃsas* there.
Circling about, the soul ascends to the top of *sunn,*
where the music of the *kingrī* and *sārangī* abounds.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 26:3.3–4, SBP p.227

Similarly, Mīrābāī writes:

> Let us go to the inaccessible country
> where even *Kāl* (the lord of death) will fear us.
> There are lakes that brim with love,
> where *haṃsas* play in blissful rapture.
> *Mīrābāī, Shabdāvalī, Shabd 23:1–2, MBS p.11*

And Kabīr says:

> In the vault of the sky *(gagan),*
> divine dew rains down in endless showers,
> and sound arises with no musical instrument:
> It is heard in contemplation.
> There is no lake, but the lotus blossoms,
> above which *haṃsas* play in pure delight.
> With no moon *(chandā),* there is moonlight,
> and wherever you look are *haṃsas* floating in joy....
> Kabīr says, listen my friend:
> he who reaches here becomes immortal;
> He will never again face death.
> *Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Bhed Bānī 19:1–3, 7, KSS1 p.64*

See also: **bird**.

1. *Chhāndogya Upanishad* 4:7.1–4.

haṃsī (S/H/Pu), **haṃsnī** (H/Pu) See **haṃsa**.

hans(a) (S/H/Pu) A variant spelling of *haṃsa*. See **haṃsa**.

Hari mandir (H/Pu), **Hari mandar** (Pu) *Lit.* temple *(mandir, mandar)* of the Lord *(Hari);* used by the *Gurus* in the line of Nānak for the human form. *Mandir* and *mandar* also mean palace or any impressive building or mansion. Many mystics have referred to the human body as the true temple of the living God, the temple where the Lord dwells. In a religious sense, a temple or church or other similar buildings constructed by man are considered to be the special abodes of God. Mystics say that the Lord is the essence of life and he is to be found, not in buildings of inert matter, but in the centre of an individual's own being.

At the physical level, the soul is enshrined in a body. Since it is in the human form that God can be realized and truly worshipped, this form has been called the temple of God:

> This body is the Lord's mansion (*Hari mandar*, temple of God),
> wherein is revealed the jewel *(ratan)* of divine comprehension.
> The egocentrics (*manmukh*, followers of the mind) know not at all,
> and say that within the mortal
> is not the God's mansion *(Hari mandar)*.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1346, MMS*

And:

> That alone is said to be the God's temple *(Hari mandar)*,
> wherefrom the God is realized.
> Realizing the pervading soul to be everywhere,
> through the *Guru*'s instruction (*Bachan*, Word),
> one finds the Lord in the human body itself.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 953, MMS*

See also: **temple of God**.

ḥawāss al-bāṭin (A), **ḥawāss-i bāṭin** (P) *Lit.* internal *(bāṭin)* faculties *(ḥawāss);* the faculties of the mind, which use the data from the physical senses, and which are necessary for functioning in the physical world; also called *ḥawāss al-dimāgh al-bāṭinīyah* (internal faculties of the brain) or *ḥawāss al-khamsah bāṭinīyah* (five internal senses) contrasted with the five physical senses, the *ḥawāss al-dimāgh al-ẓāhirīyah* (external faculties of the brain) or *ḥawāss al-khamsah ẓāhirīyah* (five external senses).

There are some variations in lists of the *ḥawāss al-bāṭin*, but the five commonly mentioned are:

1. *Ḥiss al-mushtarak.* The 'common sense', the *sensorium*, the faculty that integrates and analyses all the information coming in through the senses.
2. *Khayāl.* Thinking; also fantasy, imagination.
3. *Wahm.* Comprehension, understanding, opinion.
4. *Ḥāfiẓah.* Memory.
5. *Mutaṣarrifah.* The power of will; the power that utilizes what the external sources (the senses) and the internal sources (the other four *ḥawāss al-bāṭin*) present to it.

Wahm also means illusion, imagination, fancy, fiction or chimera, but in the context of the *ḥawāss al-bāṭin,* it means comprehension or understanding.

See also: **ḥawāss al-ẓāhir**, **ḥawāss-i dil** (▸2), **al-ḥiss al-mushtarak**, **khayāl**, **wahm**.

ḥawāss al-ẓāhir (A), **ḥawāss-i ẓāhir** (P) *Lit.* external *(ẓāhir)* faculties or senses *(ḥawāss);* the physical senses; the five physical faculties of sensory perception, *viz.* sight *(bāsirah),* hearing *(sāmi'ah),* taste *(ẓā'qah),* smell *(shāmah)* and touch *(lāmisah);* also called the *ḥawāss al-dimāgh al-ẓāhirīyah* (external senses of the brain) and *ḥawāss al-khamsah ẓāhirīyah* (five external senses).

The five external *ḥawāss,* together with five internal or mental faculties, the *ḥawāss al-bāṭin,* are necessary for functioning in the material world. For this reason, Sufis have sometimes described the human frame as a ten-layered vesture or cloak. When these external and internal faculties are transcended, by means of the purification of the Sufi way, then the *ḥawāss-i dil* or *ḥawāss al-qalb* (faculties of the heart), by which the inner worlds beyond the physical plane are perceived, begin to function. Then, as Lāhījī explains, the seeker is able to "hear the divine mysteries with the ear of love".[1]

The physical senses are regarded as distractions in all spiritual traditions. Rūmī likens perception through the physical senses to lighting a lamp in a house at night, thereby indicating the impermanence and faithlessness of the senses:

> At night a lamp is placed in every house in order that,
> by its light, the inmates may be delivered from darkness.
> That lamp is this body,
> its light like the animal soul;
> It requires a wick and this and that.
> That lamp with six wicks, namely, these senses *(ḥawāss),*
> is based entirely upon sleep and food.
> Without food and sleep it would not live half a moment;
> Nor even with food and sleep does it live either.
> Without wick and oil it has no duration,
> and with wick and oil, it is also transient.
> Inasmuch as its light, related to secondary causes,
> is seeking death:
> How should it live when the bright day is the death of it?
>
> Likewise all the human senses *(ḥawāss)* are impermanent,
> because they are naught
> in the presence of the Day of Resurrection.

> The light of the senses *(ḥawāss)* and spirits of our fathers
> are not wholly perishable and naught, like the grass;
> But, like the stars and moonbeams,
> they vanish in the radiance of the sun.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:425–33, MJR4 pp.295–96*

The "six wicks" are the five ordinary senses plus the 'common sense' *(ḥiss al-mushtarak),* which integrates all their input. The physical senses give out a feeble and partial light, like a lamp in a house compared with the sun. Moreover, Rūmī points out that death puts an end to the physical senses, as the rising sun extinguishes the stars.

See also: **ḥawāss-i dil** (▸2), **ḥawāss al-bāṭin**.

1. Lāhījī, *Sharḥ-i Gulshan-i Rāz, SGR* p.624; *cf.* in *SSE1* p.197.

ḥayyah (He) *Lit.* vitality; a fourth level or aspect of the human soul or being according to Rabbi Isaac Luria and other later Kabbalists. The eighteenth-century *Ḥasidim* also used the term in the same way.

In addition to the three aspects or levels of soul or being *(nefesh, ruaḥ* and *neshamah)* described by the Kabbalists, Luria and others said that there were two others – *ḥayyah* and *yeḥidah.* These are manifested only in rare, spiritually evolved individuals who have attained even higher levels of spirituality than *neshamah.*

Ḥayyah is used in a number of places in *Genesis,*[1] but the Kabbalists probably adopted the term because of its use where God is described as having breathed the "Spirit of Life *(Nishmat Ḥayyim)*" into Adam, the first man. On receiving this "Spirit" or "Breath of Life", Adam becomes a vital soul *(nefesh ḥayyah),* suggesting the infusion of a spiritual element from above the level of the *nefesh:*

> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the Breath of Life *(Nishmat Ḥayyim);* and man became a living soul *(nefesh ḥayyah).*
>
> *Genesis 2:7, KJV*

The Kabbalists may also have been influenced by a second-century *midrash* (biblical commentary), which is the first place where *ḥayyah* is used to mean the soul's immortal nature. The *Midrash* does not, however, speak of divisions of the soul; it used the five terms to define its qualities or aspects:

> Five names are given to the soul: *nefesh, neshamah, ḥayyah, ruaḥ, yeḥidah. Nefesh* is the blood.... *Ruaḥ* ... ascends and descends.... *Neshamah* is the breath.... *Ḥayyah* (living): because all the limbs are mortal, whereas this is immortal in the body. *Yeḥidah* (unique): because all the limbs are duplicated, whereas this is unique in the body.
>
> *Midrash Rabbah, Genesis 14:9; cf. WZ2 p.690, JCL*

See also: **nefesh, neshamah, ruaḥ**.

1. *Genesis* 1:20,21,24,30, 2:7,19, 9:10,12,15,16.

ḥiss al-mushtarak, al- (A), **ḥiss-i mushtarak** (P) *Lit.* the common *(mushtarak)* sense *(ḥiss);* one of the five *ḥawāss-i bāṭin* (inner faculties of the mind), *ḥiss* being the singular of *ḥawāss;* that which receives the impressions transmitted from the five bodily senses and integrates them; the mental counterpart to the *sensorium*. Jurjānī explains:

> This is an energy in which the detailed images of physical manifestations are imprinted. The five external senses are like its spies and through them the mind becomes aware of and understands those images. This energy is located in front of the first ventricle of the cerebrum, and the five senses have the appearance of five rivers flowing out from it.
>
> *Jurjānī, Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt, in FN19 p.20*

In Sufi terms, ordinary human beings are subject to the *ḥiss-i mushtarak*. That is, the only data available to them is the input from the physical senses. They are virtually ruled by the *ḥiss-i mushtarak,* which integrates sensory data into meaningful information.

Rūmī points out that although man's spiritual potential is higher than the angels, the ordinary man cannot be so regarded. "Awareness" here means mystic knowledge or *gnosis:*

> The spirit *(jān)* is nothing but the experience of awareness:
> the greater the awareness, the higher the spirit *(jān)*.
> Our spirit *(jān)* is higher than the spirit of animals *(jān-i ḥayavān)*.
> Why? Because it has more awareness.
> And the spirit *(jān)* of angels is higher than our spirit *(jān)*,
> for it transcends the common sense *(ḥiss-i mushtarak);*
> And the spirit *(jān)* of the Saints,
> the possessors of hearts, is even higher.
> Cease your astonishment!
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:3326–29; cf. MJR2 p.394, in SPL p.31*

See also: **ḥawāss al-bāṭin**.

house, **house of poverty** Esoterically, the physical body. No one lives in one house forever, some factor always leading to a move, at least at death. Similarly, the soul is said to live in the body as in a house. The soul does not have permanent ownership of the body, but has to leave whenever its assigned period of stay is over. When evicted from one house by death, it occupies another house at the subsequent rebirth.

The imagery being simple, it has been used by mystics of many cultures, languages and times. A Manichaean psalmist, for example, in a passage addressed to the divine Physician and "true light" prays for help while in "this dark house":

> Many are the labours that I suffered
>   while I was in this dark house.
> You, therefore, my true light, enlighten me within.
> Set me up, for I have tumbled down,
>   and help me with you to the Height.
> Be not far from me.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.152*

Similarly, the gnostic author of the *Authoritative Teaching* writes:

> Our soul indeed is ill
>   because she dwells in a house of poverty,
>   while matter strikes blows at her eyes,
>   wishing to make her blind.
>
> *Authoritative Teaching 27, NHS11 pp.270–73*

Jesus also uses the expression by implication when he advises:

> Ask, and it shall be given you;
> Seek, and ye shall find;
> Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
>
> For everyone that asketh, receiveth;
> And he that seeketh, findeth;
> And to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.
>
> *Matthew 7:7–8, KJV*

Knocking implies the door of a house – in this instance, the inner door or single eye. The knocking is that of meditation or mystic prayer. Jesus also gives the example of casting the "strong man" out of the "house" – where the "strong man" refers to the mind as the agent of Satan.[1]

Again, mystics have constantly warned man of wasting his time in this world, and in the Manichaean psalms, there is a poignant passage where human bodies are described as "houses … given on lease" or "on loan":

> The years pass like months,
>   the months fly away like moments.
> These (bodies) are houses which are given on lease:
>   years, they are, taken on loan.
> I am not sick at heart for the bodies,
>   but for the treasure of the living ones (the souls)
>   that is lodged in them.
>
> *Psalms of Thomas XIII, Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.218, SCMP p.120*

Likewise, in another of the Manichaean psalms, the psalmist first describes the people of the world, saying:

> They pass their whole life,
>   given over to eating and drinking and lust….
> They quarrel with one another
>   for a possession that passes away:
> Because of a fatal treasure,
>   they come to fight with one another.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXV, MPB pp.81–82*

He then continues by exhorting his reader to make spiritual use of human life, for "you are a stranger, housed in a body of earth defiled":

> Why, O my soul, do you fritter your life away now? …
>   lest they take you before the Judge
>   by reason of [desires] and lusts?
> The days of your life are running from you:
> Why do you vainly waste your zeal
>   on the things of the earth, putting behind you
>   all the things of heaven?
> You have spent your life sunk in the worries
>   and cares of the world,
>   working yourself into a decline
>   through its pains and sorrows.
>
> You are a stranger, housed in a body of the earth defiled:
> How long therefore have you been heedless
>   of what you are ignorantly doing?

You toil all the time to nourish your body:
  yet you have not worried, poor thing,
  in what way you can be saved.
You weep and shed tears for a son or a friend dying:
  yet your own departing –
The thought of it enters not into your heart.

Look therefore at that which is hidden from you,
  and see from today henceforth:
Lo, the way to travel is before you,
  forget not your departing.
Choose not the life of this body before eternal life:
  let the fear of God enter your heart,
  and you shall live without toil.

Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXV; cf. MPB p.82

See also: **door** (▸2), **ghar**.

1. *Matthew* 12:29, *KJV*.

hṛiday(a) chakra (S/H), **hirde chakkar** (Pu) *Lit.* heart *(hṛidaya)* wheel *(chakra);* heart centre, heart plexus, heart *chakra;* the twelve-petalled lotus situated in subtle matter within the spinal cord, at the level of the heart; one of the six *chakras* of *piṇḍa;* also called the *anāhata* (unstruck) *chakra.* The heart or *hṛidaya chakra* is the organizational centre of pranic or subtle life energy associated with the airy *tattva (vāyu* or *pavana),* the pranic current here being known as *prāṇa.* In traditional Hindu thought, the presiding deity at this centre is *Shiva,* generally known as 'the destroyer'. In this context, however, his primary functions are the protection and destruction of the physical form. This is reflected, for instance, in bodily anabolism and catabolism, the building up and breaking down processes that comprise the biochemical processes of metabolism.

The *prāṇa* associated with the airy *tattva* (elemental state of matter) is both the source of life as well as the cause of death. Hence, *Shiva* is both the protector and the destroyer. He is the protector in the sense that it is he who enlivens the body and its functions with the pranic current. He is the destroyer, in that it is he who withdraws this energy. Since it is *Shiva* who controls the on-off switch of life from the *hṛidaya chakra,* he is described as both the protector and the destroyer.

The *Shiva Saṃhitā* describes this centre as the *anāhata:*

> In the heart, is the fourth *chakra,* the *anāhata.* It has twelve petals designated by the letters *ka, kha, ga, gha, ṅa, cha, chha, ja, jha, ña, ṭa, ṭha.* Its colour is deep blood red; it has the seed of *vāyu (i.e. prāṇa),* and is a very pleasant spot.
>
> In this lotus is a flame called *bāṇalinga;* by contemplating on it, things of the seen and unseen universe are known.
>
> Its presiding adept is *Pinākī,* and the *Kākinī* is its goddess. He who always contemplates on the lotus of the heart is eagerly desired by celestial maidens.
>
> He gets immeasurable knowledge, knows the past, present and future time; has clairaudience, clairvoyance and can walk in the air whenever he likes.
>
> He sees the adepts, the goddesses known as *yoginīs;* obtains the power known as *khecharī* (moving in the air), and conquers all who move in the air.
>
> He who contemplates daily the hidden *bāṇalinga,* undoubtedly obtains the psychic powers known as *khecharī* and *bhūcharī* (going at will all over the world).
>
> I cannot fully describe the importance of the meditation at this lotus; even the gods, *Brahmā* and so on, keep the method of its contemplation secret.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 5:83–89; cf. SSV pp.67–68*

The *bāṇalinga* (*lit.* arrow-phallus) mentioned is presumably intended symbolically. *Bāṇalingas* are small, white, naturally polished elliptical stones, especially those found in the bed of the Nārada river. Highly prized and revered by the worshippers of *Shiva,* especially the South Indian *Lingāyatas,* they are worshipped as the phallus of *Shiva.* Its appearance in this part of the *Shiva Saṃhitā* is presumably because *Shiva* is the deity of this *chakra.* The *linga* or phallus symbolizes the power of the deity. Hence the assertion that contemplating on the "flame" or light known as *bāṇalinga* bestows miraculous powers and knowledge.

The *hṛidaya chakra,* through the *vāyu tattva,* is the subtle administrator of the respiratory system, of some aspects of the nervous system and of other bodily systems. Just as the airy *tattva* is expressed in the intricate manipulative skills and sensitive touch of the hands and fingers, so, for example, is this same detail and intricacy expressed through the thymus gland, the orchestrator of the amazingly complex bodily immune system which protects the body by destroying invaders.

To gain control of or to awaken consciousness at this centre, yogis are said to hold the attention here while repeating the word *sohang* (I am He).

See also: **chakra, prāṇa, tattva**.

hṛiday(a) kamal(a) (S/H) *Lit.* lotus *(kamal)* of the heart *(hṛidaya);* the heart centre or *chakra.*

See **hṛidaya chakra**.

hsīn (xīn) (C) *Lit.* heart-mind; the emotional, thinking and intuitive faculties of man, regarded as one indivisible entity in Chinese thought. The Taoist classic, the *Ì Chīng (Classic of Change),* says that the fundamental state of the heart-mind is that of equilibrium and tranquillity. However, when aroused through the activity of *ch'ì* (energy, life force), feeling and thinking processes dominate. To the Taoist, it is the *hsīn* which accumulates beliefs, preferences and categorizations (through the processes of thinking and feeling), which contribute to an ignorance of the essential nature of *Tào.*

The allied term *hsīn líng* means heart-mind-soul, which describes the spirit or soul of life, as evidenced in the consciousness of man.

See also: **hún**, **líng hún**, **p'ò**, **shén**.

hún (hún) (C) *Lit.* soul; specifically, heavenly soul. Although the literal meaning is 'soul', *hún* is actually one of two main aspects of the soul of a human being; the other is *p'ò.*

The qualities of *hún* in the soul are heavenly, spiritual, active and *yáng* in nature; they regulate the higher physical and mental functions. *P'ò* is earthly, physical, passive and *yīn* in nature. At the time of death, it is believed that *hún* returns to Heaven, while *p'ò,* originating in the physical, remains a part of the physical realm, often staying near the corpse until the body disintegrates.

The complete name for soul in Chinese is *líng hún,* which is the individualized aspect of spirit or *shén.* According to Taoists, *shén* brings consciousness and life to a being through its interaction with *ch'ì* (breath, life force).

See also: **ātman**, **ch'ì**, **jān**, **líng hún**, **neshamah**, **p'ò**, **rūḥ**, **shén**, **soul**.

iḍā (S), **iṛā** (H/Pu) One of the three currents, *iḍā, pingalā* and *sushumṇā,* flowing through all creation below *trikuṭī* (universal mind); of uncertain derivation. In the *Ṛig Veda, iḍā* is used for nourishment or a refreshing drink, especially an offering to a deity; later, it comes to mean a stream of praise.

Pingalā, iḍā and *sushumṇā* are expressions of the three *guṇas – rajas, tamas* and *sattva,* respectively – and together with the *guṇas,* have their origin in the region of the universal mind *(trikuṭī).* Above *trikuṭī,* at a point known as *tribeṇī* or Prayāg, these three currents merge into one, when they flow out into the purely spiritual realm of *daswān dwār*. They also have a reflected meeting point (also called *tribeṇī*) lower down in *sahans dal kanwal*. For the ascending soul, at whatever level, the path always lies in the central current. Traditional Hindu thought represents *pingalā* as the river Yamunā (Jumna), *iḍā* as the river Gangā (Ganges), and *sushumṇā* as the Sarasvatī. Likewise, *pingalā* is the sun and *iḍā* is the moon.

In the human body, these three are reflected as the three main subtle pranic currents or *nāḍīs* that run along the spinal cord, carrying *prāṇa* or life energy. Starting from the left 'petal' of the two-petalled *ājñā chakra* or eye centre, *iḍā* coils around the central *sushumṇā,* passing through each of the five lower physical *chakras*. *Pingalā* begins from the right 'petal', coiling in the opposite direction. According to tantric texts, *iḍā* is of pale colour, moonlike and containing nectar.

See also: **guṇa** (5.2), **nāḍī**, **prāṇa**, **sahans dal kanwal** (4.1), **triveṇī** (4.1).

image of God Man; an expression originating in *Genesis,* where man is described as being made in the image of God:

> And God said:
> "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:
> and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,
> and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle,
> and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing
> that creepeth upon the earth."
> So God created man in His (own) image,
> in the image of God created He him.
>
> *Genesis 1:26–27, KJV*

Interpreted mystically, it means that the real essence of a human being, the soul, is the same as that of God. It is a drop of His Being. It means that the true, inner man – the soul – resembles God; not that God resembles the physical form of man. The idea of man being made in God's image is common in ancient literature, as in the Pythagorean and Hermetic writings from the early Christian era:

> You will honour God perfectly if you conduct yourself
> so that your soul may become His image.
>
> *Pythagorean Saying, in Golden Verses of Pythagoras 1; cf. HVP p.9*

And:

> But All-Father Mind, being Life and light, did bring forth man co-equal to Himself, with whom He fell in love, as being His own child; for he was beautiful beyond compare, the Image of his Sire. In very truth, God fell in love with His own Form (*or* Beauty); and on him did bestow all His own formations.
>
> *Corpus Hermeticum I:12, TGH2 p.8*

The Image of God was also understood to mean the creative Power.

See also: **Image of God** (3.1), **man**, **soul**, **spirit**, **ẓelem**.

immortality of the soul The doctrine that the soul is not subject to death or decay, and is thus essentially everlasting or eternal; that the soul, being a part of God, partakes of His characteristics, including that of immortality; that although the body and other coverings may change or be shed, the soul lives on.

As a doctrine, immortality of the soul is closely linked to a belief in the soul's existence prior to human birth, and also to reincarnation. These beliefs were taught by a number of the early Greek philosophers, and were prevalent among the educated in early Christian times. Many of the early Christian fathers were well versed in Greek philosophy, and Greek thought has greatly influenced Christian theology. A few early Christian teachers, notably Origen (*c.*185–254), believed in immortality, pre-existence and reincarnation. There are also many other indications in early Christian writings that an understanding of the soul's essential immortality was widespread, especially among the gnostics. It is also a fundamental feature of John's gospel, where Jesus speaks frequently of the soul's eternal life.

Neither the pre-existence of the soul nor reincarnation were acceptable to later Christian theologians, however, and from the fourth century onwards, after Christianity gained power and patronage from the Roman Empire, these doctrines were increasingly rejected.

Even so, Christianity has retained a belief in the immortality of the soul, although its precise nature has been a matter of theological debate. In particular, the belief in resurrection on the Day of Judgment, as embodied in the teaching of St Paul,[1] includes the reunion of the soul with the body, after which the two will live forever in the world to come. Thus, although many of the early Christian fathers took their original belief in immortality from the Greeks, believing that the body and soul were essentially distinct, the Christian doctrine of resurrection on the Last Day supposes a permanent link between body and soul.

See also: **life eternal, man, neshamah, reincarnation and transmigration (in Christianity)** (6.3).

1. *e.g. 1 Corinthians* 15, and elsewhere.

individual mind A drop or ray of the universal mind, with which every human being is endowed. It contains the seeds of an individual's destiny and records the new impressions created by actions and desires performed in the present life, as well as providing the characteristics of memory, intellect, discrimination, thought, emotion, personality, ego or identity, instinct and so on.

See also: **mind, piṇḍī man, universal mind** (6.1).

indrī chakra, indrī kanwal (Pu) *Lit.* organ *(indrī)* wheel *(chakra);* the sex centre or plexus; the six-petalled *chakra* or lotus *(kanwal),* situated on a level with the reproductive organs; also called the *svādhishṭhāna chakra.*

See **svādhishṭhāna chakra**.

indriya (S/H), **indrī** (Pu) *Lit.* organ; a part of the body; specifically, the five sense organs (S. *jñānendriya,* H. *gyānendriya*) and the five motor organs (S./H. *karmendriya*); refers both to the gross organs and to their subtle counterparts within the mind energies.

In their subtle aspects, the *indriyas* are that aspect of the human mind (the *antaḥkaraṇa*) which is associated with sensory perception and motor response in the physical world. In the process of sight, for example, the actual perception of colour and form takes place in the mind. Dissection of the eye, the optic nerve or any part of the brain does not disclose anything that resembles an individual's experience of colour and form because that experience lies in the mind – in the mental sensory *indriya* or mental counterpart to the sense organ.

Similarly, to walk or run, an individual must have a mental conception of moving about by walking or running. This is located in the mental motor *indriya* of mobility. Likewise, each of the senses and motor functions has a mental *indriya* or counterpart.

The chart on the following page illustrates how the five sensory *indriyas* and five motor *indriyas* come into existence as the mind interacts with the five *tattvas* in their subtle form.[1]

While it is readily appreciated that there are five major modes of physical sense perception, it requires some consideration to understand that all actions can be similarly categorized into the five described. There is some

Tattva	**Sensory** ***Indriya***	**Motor** ***Indriya***	**Sense Organ**	**Motor Organ**
Ākāsh (Ether)	Hearing	Speech	Ears	Mouth
Air	Touch	Manipulation	Skin	Hands
Fire	Sight	Mobility	Eyes	Legs
Water	Taste	Procreation	Tongue	Genitalia
Earth	Smell	Elimination	Nose	Rectum

The relationship between the **indriyas** *and the five* **tattvas**

difficulty finding appropriate and simple words to name these five because, for example, 'grasping' includes all actions related to 'getting hold of' or to simply acquiring something – not only to physical manipulation, but to acquisition in general. Although the hands are the major motor organ associated with getting hold of things (manipulation), the feet, head, mouth or other parts of the body can also be used in this process. Similarly 'mobility' is the act of 'getting about', of moving the body somewhere, action in which the legs are usually – but not always – primarily involved. Further, just as the perception of a scene is through a mixture of the five senses, so too are actions brought about by a mixture of the five motor *indriyas.*

Like the five sensory *indriyas,* the motor *indriyas* are mental as well as physical faculties. They include the mental conception which makes the physical action possible. With the mind so intimately involved in both the sensory and motor aspects of physical living, it can be readily appreciated how easy it is for the mind to become so bound up with the *indriyas* that it loses all thought of independent action. Thought and emotion are constantly disturbed by the influence of the *indriyas.* It thus becomes impossible for the average person to control his thoughts and emotions, because of the influence of the sensory and motor functions. The potential for clear thinking, sound reason and reliable intuition are continually clouded by the surging mental and emotional waves caused by the contact of the mind with the physical universe. So great is this disturbance, and so unconscious of himself does it make a person, that he is hardly aware that anything is amiss. He is certainly unaware, in many instances, that the source of all his difficulties and distress lies within his own mind.

The soul, meanwhile, which gives life to both the mind and its senses, is hopelessly submerged and forgotten. The soul is the real Self, but its place has been usurped by the mind and the senses. As a consequence, many individuals are so lost in matter that they neither understand the soul as the real self, nor do they even consider the illusory ego of the mind – though they are constantly influenced by it – as their real self. The real person is regarded as the physical substance itself, the body, that which is perceived through the play of the *indriyas*. This is *māyā* or illusion at its most powerful. Mystics point out that the situation should be reversed. The soul should control the mind, and the mind should control the senses.

Practically all schools of traditional Hindu philosophy and meditation agree that the senses must be brought under control for real spiritual progress to begin. It is considered at some length in the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gītā* and all the traditional *yoga* texts. The *Bhagavad Gītā* says:

> Wandering between the senses *(indriyas)*,
> whichever one the mind follows,
> it carries off the mind's discriminative faculty
> as a gale drives a boat upon the water.
>
> Therefore, O mighty Arjuna,
> he who completely restrains his senses
> from following their objects
> is firmly established in wisdom.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 2:67–68; cf. BGT*

Likewise, the mystic Charaṇdās observes, using the colloquial variant, *indrin:*

> The mind *(man)* is a slave of the senses *(indrins)*,
> and the intellect *(buddh)* a slave of the mind;
> Tell me, how can a person in a state of such conflict
> be immersed in contemplation of the Lord!
>
> *Charaṇdās, Bānī 1, Indriyoṁ kā Varṇan 28, CDB1 p.16*

See also: **antaḥkaraṇa**, **māyā** (6.2), **tattva**.

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1. The sources of these correlations between the *tattvas* and *indriyas* are various. *e.g.* Swāmī Nikhilānanda: *The Upanishads, U1* p.89; introduction to *Ātmabodha, SKS* pp.68–75, 89–90.

insānīyah (A), **insānīyat** (P) *Lit.* human-ness; human nature; the mysterious nature of man as the epitome of the universe, including both his temporality, existing in a short-lived body, and his potential of realizing God. Hujwīrī says that man needs

> an explanation of the qualities of human nature *(insānīyat)* and the mystery thereof, … and inasmuch as a man is bound to know God, he must first know himself.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV:6, KM p.197*

An associated term, *basharīyah,* is also translated into English as 'human nature', but connotes that part of man which pulls him down – his fleshly desires which must be overcome to tread the spiritual path.

See also: **'ālam al-nāsūt** (4.1).

iṛā (H/Pu) See **iḍā**.

jal(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* water; one of the five primary *tattvas* or states of matter, having both subtle and gross aspects.

See also: **pānī**, **svādhishṭhāna chakra**, **tattva**.

jān (P) *Lit.* life, spirit, soul; the Persian equivalent of the Arabic *rūḥ*. Regarded as the source of life, the *jān* is both universal and individual: it is the divine Essence, and it gives life to the individual. Referring to the *Qur'ān,* Rūmī identifies the universal *Jān* or Spirit with God's creative Command *(al-Amr),* from which the "form" of the "creation" comes into being:

> Know, therefore, that (in the *Qur'ān*):
> "To Him belongs the creation *(al-khalq)*
> and to Him the Command *(al-Amr)*"[1] –
> "The creation" is the form *(ṣūrat),*
> and "the Command" is the Spirit *(Jān)* riding above it.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:78; cf. MJR6 p.261*

Referring to the individual *jān,* Hujwīrī says that "God created the body, and committed its life to the spirit *(jān).*"[2] Rūmī likewise distinguishes between the body and the *jān,* which he also equates with the *rūḥ:*

> The body has no share in that glory:
> the body is as a drop of water
> in comparison with the sea of the spirit *(baḥr-i jān).*
> The days of the body are increased by the spirit *(jān):*
> mark what becomes of the body when the spirit *(jān)* goes.
> The height of your body is six feet or so, no more:
> your spirit *(jān)* is a maker of swift flights to heaven.
>
> In the spirit's *(rūḥ)* imagination, O prince,
> 'tis half a step to Baghdad and Samarkand.

The white of your eye is two dirhams in weight:
 the light of its spirit *(rūḥ)* reaches to the lofty region of the sky.
Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1880–84; cf. MJR4 p.376

Thus, Rūmī's advice contains the essence of spiritual development:

Become spirit *(jān)*,
 and know spirit *(jān)* by means of spirit *(jān)*:
Become the friend of mystic vision,
 not the child of speculation.
Rūmī, Maśnavī III:3192; cf. MJR4 p.179

The seeker must know his own *jān*, must become his own *jān*. But, he says, this is only possible by awakening the faculty of inner vision. Only he who has developed his *jān* into the *jān-i vaḥy* (spirit endowed with inner revelation) is protected from illusion or "error":

'Tis only the … the soul of divine inspiration *(jān-i vaḥy)*
 that is protected and purged of error.
Rūmī, Maśnavī III:3337, MJR4 p.187

Sufi psychology includes *jān*, *'aql* (higher mind) and *nafs* (lower mind). *Nafs* is the mind that functions in the body and the material world. Both *'aql* and *jān* belong to the realms above the physical universe, but the source of the *jān* is higher than the source of the *'aql*. Yet both are imprisoned in the 'clay' of the material creation. Rūmī speaks of the *jān* as the essence of spiritual being:

The spirit *(jān)* is nothing but the experience of awareness:
 the greater the awareness, the higher the spirit *(jān)*.
Our spirit *(jān)* is higher than the spirit of animals *(jān-i ḥayavān)*.
Why? Because it has more awareness.
And the spirit *(jān)* of angels is higher than our spirit *(jān)*,
 for it transcends the common sense *(ḥiss-i mushtarak)*;
And the spirit *(jān)* of the Saints,
 the possessors of hearts, is even higher.
Cease your astonishment!
Rūmī, Maśnavī II:3326–29; cf. MJR2 p.394, in SPL p.31

Though *jān* is used in a general sense, it is also used more specifically for the soul imprisoned in the body. Freed from the body, the soul is known as *ravān* (*lit.* flowing), and at a yet higher stage it becomes the *sirr (lit.* secret).

See also: **'aql**, **ātman**, **hún**, **nafs**, **ñe'eng**, **neshamah**, **ravān**, **ruaḥ**, **rūḥ**, **sirr**, **surat**.

1. *Qur'ān* 7:54.
2. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XV, *KM* p.269.

jān-i ātish (P) *Lit.* spirit *(jān)* of fire *(ātish);* soul of fire; a term coined by Rūmī for the *nafs* (lower mind). One who sees the realms within is said to 'see by the light of God', while one whose vision is limited by and corrupted by the passions is said to 'see by the fire of God'. Hence, the carnal nature of man is called the "soul of fire":

> When the soul of fire *(jān-i ātish)* gained therefrom (from the fire of God) an extinguisher of (its own) fire, then the dead soul felt within itself a movement (of life).
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1955, MJR2 p.106*

jān-i rabbānī (P) *Lit.* divine *(rabbānī)* spirit *(jān);* the immortal soul; contrasted with the *jān-i ḥayavānī* (animal soul), which is essentially the spirit of the unenlightened man, dependent on the physical senses for its perception. In a parable, Rūmī likens the *jān-i rabbānī* to the light of the sun, and the *jān-i ḥayavānī* to the light of a lamp, lit in a house at night. When the sun rises, it extinguishes the lights of the house lamps; and for as long as it shines, this one light illuminates all the individual houses.[1]

See also: **rūḥ-i ḥayavānī**.

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* IV:453–61, *MJR4* p.297.

janm(a) (S/H), **janam** (H/Pu) *Lit.* birth, production, origin, creation, nativity, existence, life, state of existence, lifetime. Mystics have used the term to refer to a birth or life in this world. Human life or human birth, they say, is a precious opportunity for spiritual growth and God-realization. It is not to be wasted in the pleasures and activities of material existence:

> You have received the rarity of a human *(mānukh)* birth *(janam),*
> but you will not get it repeatedly.
> So grasp the opportunity and obtain true understanding,
> singing the Lord's Name.
>
> *Mīrābāī, Shabdāvalī, Chetāvnī 2:1–2, MBS p.1*

> Throughout the four *yugas,* you have suffered,
> bearing great pain, and thrown into hell as well.
> Birth after birth *(janam-janam),*
> you have endured nothing but distress,
> with no respite anywhere.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:10.2–3, SBP p.119*

> For several births *(janam),* thou became a worm and a moth.
> In several births *(janam),* thou wert an elephant, a fish and a deer.
> In several births *(janam),* thou became a bird and a snake.
> In several births *(janam),* thou wert yoked as a horse and an ox.
> Meet the Lord of the universe *(Jagdīs),* this is the time to meet:
> after a long time this human body is fashioned.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 176, MMS*

jism (A/P) (pl. *ajsām*) *Lit.* body. In addition to the physical body, Sufis speak of various subtle bodies contained within a human being. These include:

1. *Al-jism al-nārī* (A), *jism-i nārī* (P). The body of fire *(nārī);* so-called because it shines with its own light, like fire; probably equivalent to the etheric body, the body of subtle, but physical energies, that vitalizes the body of gross matter; the body possessed by the *jinn.*
2. *Al-jism al-laṭīf* (A), *jism-i laṭīf* (P). The subtle *(laṭīf)* body, probably equivalent to the astral body; also called *ṣūrah al-mithālīyah* (form of patterns), used by the soul in *'ālam al-mithāl* (world of patterns), the realm of which this physical world is a projection or a reflection.
3. *Al-jism al-nūrī* (A), *jism-i nūrī* (P). The body of light *(nūrī);* probably equivalent to the astral body; the body possessed by angels.

It is said that spirits not endowed with a physical body can manifest in the *jism-i nārī* (body of fire) of the *jinn* or the *jism-i nūrī* (body of light) of the angels. These 'bodies' are

> the manifestations of spirits, represented in either a fiery body *(jism-i nārī),* which has the gross nature of the flesh, or in a luminous body *(jism-i nūrī),* which has a subtle and spiritual nature. "Then We sent unto her (Mary) our Spirit *(Jabra'īl),* and it assumed for her a well-proportioned human form."[1]
>
> *Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.19, in FNI1 p.26, in SSE1 p.24*

The Prophet also said that *Jabra'īl* sometimes communicated with him in a sound like the ringing of bells, and sometimes appeared in a luminous body, speaking as one person to another.

Sufis also described other aspects of a human being as bodies. Thus, the *nafs* (lower mind, carnal soul) is viewed as a subtle body, a substance or energy, not as an attribute or the self. For this reason, the physical, ethereal and astral planes are sometimes grouped together under the name, *'ālam al-ajsām* (domain of bodies). All such bodies are like garments or coverings over the soul. Hence, Rūmī writes:

> The body *(tan)* is like a garment.
> Go, seek the wearer of the garment,
>   do not kiss a garment....
> You are such that without the (material) body *(badan)*
>   you have a (subtle) body *(badan):*
> Do not, then, dread the going forth
>   of the soul *(jān)* from the body *(jism).*
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:1610, 1613, MJR4 pp.90–91*

1. *Qur'ān* 19:17.

jism al-laṭīf, al- (A), **jism-i laṭīf** (P) See **jism.**

jism al-nārī, al- (A), **jism-i nārī** (P) See **jism.**

jism al-nūrī, al- (A), **jism-i nūrī** (P) See **jism.**

jīv(a) (S/H/Pu), **jīa** (H/Pu) *Lit.* living, existing; what lives or is animate; hence, any living being; specifically, an incarnate soul, the individual or unliberated soul; sometimes used to denote human beings in general; hence, a mortal; also, soul, mind, heart, life, being; a term commonly found in ancient Hindu literature and used by mystics throughout the many centuries of Indian mystical tradition.

The *jīva* or unliberated incarnate soul is contrasted with the *ātman* or pure liberated soul. The *jīva* is subject to all the vicissitudes and changing factors of this world, while the *ātman* remains pure and untarnished, just as a diamond or pearl when thrown in the mud retains its inherent value and beauty despite its coverings of dirt. When *jīva* refers to the incarnate, embodied *ātman,* living in a physical form, it is equivalent to the term *jīvātman.*

The term is used extensively in Indian sacred literature. In the *Bhagavad Gītā,* the *jīva* is described as a part of the Divine which has become embodied. Kṛishṇa says:

> A fragment *(aṃsha)* of my immortal Being,
> having become an embodied soul *(jīva)*
> in the world of living beings,
> attracts to itself the mind and the five senses,
> born of *prakṛiti* (primal 'nature').
> When it acquires a new body or abandons an old one,
> this lord of the body takes them with it,
> as the wind wafts smells from one place to another.
> By identifying with the mind
> and the senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell,
> it experiences the things of sensory perception.
> The deluded fail to recognize it when,
> identified with the *guṇas,*
> it dwells in a body, experiences things or leaves a body.
> But not so, those with the eye of wisdom *(jñānachakshu).*
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 15:7–10; cf. BGT*

The *Chhāndogya Upanishad* says that there is life in the body only because of the presence of the *jīva:*

> Bereft of the *jīva* (soul), the (body) dies,
> but the *jīva* does not die.
>
> *Chhāndogya Upanishad 6:11.3*

And far later in time, the mystic Sahajobāī also points out, in a simple and humorous way, how the soul is the one that brings life to the body:

> "Take it out quickly (for disposal)," everybody murmurs.
> When the soul *(jīva)* has departed, says Sahajo,
> nobody befriends the body!
>
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Bairāg Upjāvan 18, SBB p.17*

In his commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad,* Gauḍapāda observes that it is possible for the *jīva* to awaken from its deep slumber in illusion *(māyā):*

> When the *jīva,* asleep under the influence of the beginningless *māyā,* is awakened, it then realizes the birthless, sleepless and dreamless Non-duality.
>
> *Gauḍapāda, Kārikā 1:16 on Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*

And the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* itself likens the *jīva* to the space contained within a pot. The space only appears to be contained within the pot. In reality, the space in the pot is always one with the infinity of space. Similarly, the *jīva* is always one with the real self or *ātman*. It is only because of its bodily confinement that it appears to be separated:

> The *Ātman* (Self) is said to be manifested in the form of *jīvas* (incarnate souls) just as space *(ākāsha)* exists as the spaces *(ākāshas)* enclosed in pots. Bodies are likewise said to be manifested from the *Ātman*, just as pots and so on are created out of *ākāsha*.
>
> *Gauḍapāda, Kārikā 3:3 on Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*

In Indian thought, the embodiment and bondage of the *jīva* implies reincarnation and transmigration, and the cause of this bondage is *avidyā* (spiritual ignorance, nescience) caused by *māyā* (illusion). The essential soul, the *ātman*, is always free and one with *Brahman*. But, distracted by *māyā*, it develops an illusory sense of self, the "non-self" or ego. Shankara depicts how the ego can be mistaken for the real self, just as a "tree stump" can be mistaken for a ghost:

> Just as a tree stump appears as a ghost so, through ignorance, does *Brahman* appear as a *jīva*. This *jīva*-hood is destroyed when the true nature of the *jīva* is realized as the (real) self.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 45*

Falling under the spell of *avidyā*, the *ātman* becomes the *jīva*, and is reborn repeatedly in the "ocean of *saṃsāra*":

> *Ātman (i.e.* the *jīva)* is essentially consciousness *(chit)*, existence *(sat)* and bliss *(ānanda)*. It is one and without a second. Yet it becomes the victim of *avidyā*....
>
> Falling under the spell of *avidyā*, *ātman* becomes lost, as it were, to the infinite majesty and knowledge which are innate in it. It thus falls prey to unending tribulations. Under the power of *avidyā*, the *jīva* considers what is *not* the highest good of life to be the highest good wished for by all. Hence, the individual *ātman*, being unable to experience liberation *(moksha)*, which is really the highest good, falls into the ocean of *saṃsāra* and wanders about – assuming the bodies of gods *(devas)*, men, animals or birds – pursued by the sharks of malice, anger and passion.
>
> *Shankara, on Shvetāshvatara Upanishad, U2 p.41*

Swāmī Nikhilānanda explains the matter in greater detail:

> The *jīva*, or individual creature, is a mixture of self and non-self, the latter comprising the mind, the senses and the body. The non-self is

> called *avidyā,* or nescience. The mixture of self and non-self is the result of a wrong identification, since the two cannot really be identified (as separate). This wrong identification is the cause of all our confusions and troubles in life. It creates the idea of ego.
>
> All our daily experiences of life are based upon an erroneous mixture of truth and untruth. Liberation consists in overcoming this false identification and transcending the ego. When a man goes beyond the ego he truly knows himself. The self in its true character is the witness or consciousness, and therefore is the same as *Brahman.* The witness is involved in all empirical thought. The true self cannot be known as an object; it is eternal knowledge, without an object. Ordinary knowledge arises when the true self functions, as a result of *avidyā,* through the mind and senses....
>
> Under the influence of *māyā,* ... the physical universe comes into existence, and by it the universe is sustained.... The same *māyā* is the cause of the delusion under whose influence the individual, or *jīva,* engages in various activities of life in order to enjoy happiness and shun misery. The *jīva* regards the objective environment, which includes other *jīvas,* as entirely distinct from itself. It develops love and hate for certain of these other *jīvas,* and remains indifferent toward the rest. Thus, as a consequence of *māyā,* the individual soul first forgets its true nature; secondly, holds the wrong belief that it is separate from others; and lastly, comes to see a physical and social environment to which it reacts in diverse ways.
>
> Suffering, which is the evil result of *māyā,* springs from the second of these consequences, namely, the wrong belief that the individual soul is separate from other living beings. For in deep sleep, a man may forget his real nature, yet he does not then experience any suffering; furthermore, in the same deep sleep, the outside world exists, as attested by other waking creatures, but without causing any harm to the sleeper. Therefore, the bitter effect of *māyā* is felt when the individual soul, under its influence, identifies itself with the body, mind and senses, and creates the notion of I-consciousness *(aham)* or ego. It is this that brings the conflict between 'I' and 'you'. Egoism is the source of all evil. Selfishness is sin, as has been declared by all religions.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, The Upanishads, U2 pp.18–20*

The various schools of Indian philosophy make much of the illusory nature of everything except *Brahman,* offering different points of view on the relationship of the *jīvātmā* to *Brahman.* Some say that the *jīva* is an illusory form of *Brahman,* others that it is *Brahman* itself which appears as the *jīva.*

The higher mystics agree that the soul is incarnate in this world. They also say that the actual home of the soul is higher than *Brahman*. The soul *(ātman)*, they explain, is a particle of God and has descended from the eternal region. But it has become entangled in the creation by the three *guṇas* (attributes of mind and matter), the five *tattvas* (essential elements), the ten *indriyas* (sense organs and motor faculties), and by all the other aspects of the mind – individual and universal. It has developed such strong affinity with the body and the things of this world that it finds it almost impossible to free itself from all these bonds.

The *indriyas*, the *tattvas*, the individual mind and so on constitute inner, invisible or subtle bonds through the force of habit, while worldly affairs and people constitute the outer bonds. The *jīvātmā* is so inextricably caught by these things, and its attention is so much bound up with them, that it has lost all recollection of its original and eternal home. In fact, so far away has it become that it finds it impossible even to begin the homeward journey without the help of a perfect Master or *Satguru*.

Until the *jīvātmā* or soul returns to the eternal realm, the individual will continue to suffer the pains and pleasures of this world. So lost has the soul become in the labyrinth of creation that it does not even realize that it is lost or what the true purpose of the human form actually is. In the majority of instances, if anyone reminds the soul of its fallen state, the message falls upon deaf ears, or the individual is sceptical or wishes to argue the point. What is obvious to the mystics, is not so to the incarnate soul. Hence, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

> In the beginning, the *surat* (soul) descended from this region *(Rādhā Swāmī pad)*, and all regions below it only mark the stages in the descent of the soul. It *(jīvātmā)* is now located in the body below *sahans dal kanwal* (thousand-petalled lotus). Its light radiates into the body from that place, and energizes the mind and the various organs of the physical, subtle and mental bodies.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 1:7, SB p.7*

And:

> *Jīvātmā* and *surat* are other names for soul. It has descended into the body from the highest planes of *Sat Nām* (true Name) and *Rādhā Swāmī* (Lord of the Soul). But it has become entangled here by the three *guṇas* (attributes).... The *jīvātmā* is so inextricably caught by these bonds that it has now no recollection of its real home. It finds itself so far away from that home that it is very difficult to return to it without the grace of a perfect *Satguru*.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 1:1, SB p.3*

See also: **ātman**.

jīvan(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* life, existence, living, subsistence, profession, livelihood, means of existence; the term is used in mystic literature for life as it is lived in this world:

> Since it is certain that you will die,
> whether you live in a palace or a hut,
> entertain no desire for life *(jīvan)*.
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Bairāg Upjāvan 28, SBB p.18*

> Our companions are leaving,
> and we too will have to go.
> Death is hovering above our head,
> and we have far to travel.
> Awake, O foolish one! Why do you sleep?
> You have taken life *(jīvan)* in this world
> to be something true and permanent.
> *Ravidās, Shrī Sant Rohidās, Pad 5:2–3, SSR p.119*

> Your life *(jīvan)* is ebbing away,
> without your ever remembering the Lord's Name.
> *Tulsīdās, Bārahmāsī, Āshāṛh 8, TDB p.2*

See also: **jīvanmukti** (▸2).

jīvansākshī (S/H) *Lit.* living *(jīvan)* witness *(sākshī);* either the *ātman* or *Brahman,* the *Paramātmā* (supreme Soul), depending on the interpretation. In the *Upanishads,* the soul is described as possessing a dual aspect. Firstly, there is the soul (or *jīvātman*) which – through association with the mind and the senses – engages in actions, thereby reaping their sweet and bitter results. Secondly, there is the soul (or *ātman*) which remains as a pure spectator or witness *(sākshī)* and who is in essence none other than *Brahman.* In a verse which occurs in both the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* and the *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad,* this state of affairs is depicted as two birds perched on the same tree (of life):

> Two birds, companions and always united,
> cling to the self-same tree.
> One eats the sweet *pippala*-fruit,
> the other looks on without eating.

> On this very tree, man *(purusha)* –
> immersed and deluded – is grieved by his impotence.
> But when he beholds the other,
> the Lord adored by all, and His glory,
> then he becomes free from grief.
>
> *Muṇḍaka Upanishad 3:1.1–2, Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 4:6–7*

The one who "looks on without eating" is the *jīvansākshī* or *ātman,* always one with *Brahman,* ever untouched by *māyā* or the illusion by which the *jīva* is enslaved. Some interpreters of this verse maintain that the witness is *Brahman* itself, the *Paramātmā* (supreme Soul), although in essence the two meanings are the same. Paraphrasing Shankara, Swāmī Nikhilānanda interprets the text:

> The two birds refer to the *jīvātmā* or individual soul and the *Paramātmā* or supreme Self. The former is pure Consciousness conditioned by the body and mind on account of its association with ignorance *(avidyā).* The latter is pure Consciousness, the Lord Himself, who is eternally pure, free, and illumined and is the master or controller of *avidyā....*
>
> The tree refers to the body. "Like a tree, the body is subject to destruction. It has its root above, in *Brahman;* and its branches (such as the *prāṇa* and the organs) spread downward. It is supported by *māyā,* or ignorance; and on it hang the diverse fruits of the actions of living beings."[1]
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, on Muṇḍaka Upanishad 3:1.1, U1 p.297*

The "former" refers to the *jīvātmā,* who eats the "diverse fruits" of many flavours, and consequently experiences the pleasures and pains of life:

> "The other" (refers to) the Lord *(Paramātmā)* who is the witness *(sākshī).* The word refers to pure Consciousness, which is endowed with such attributes as omniscience and omnipresence. He is the controller of both the individual soul and the body and is the detached witness of their activities.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, on Muṇḍaka Upanishad 3:1.1, U1 p.297*

In fact, later in the *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad,* the *sākshī,* rather than the *jīvansākshī,* is used specifically as an epithet of the Supreme:

> The one resplendent God
> is hidden in all beings.

All-pervading, the inmost Self *(Ātman)* of all creatures,
the overseer of all action *(karma),*
dwelling in all beings –
He is the witness *(sākshī),* the knower, the Absolute,
free of all attributes *(nirguṇa).*

Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 6:11

1. Shankara, *Commentary on Kaṭha Upanishad* 2:3.1; *cf. UI* p.180.

jīvātmā (S/H/Pu), **jīvātman** (S) *Lit.* living being *(jīva)* + soul *(ātmā, ātman);* the soul of a living being; the individual soul, deluded by *māyā* and incarnate in a physical body, as contrasted with the *Paramātmā* – God, the eternal Soul or Self. *Jīva* is derived from the Sanskrit root *jīv* – 'to continue breath'. *Ātman* is said to have meant 'breath' originally, and came to be applied to the essential part of anything, particularly in relation to man, his self or soul. *Jīvātman* is thus the individual soul. Usually, in Indian philosophical literature, the words *jīva* or *ātman* are used and, unless the context indicates otherwise, mean *jīvātman.*

See **jīva**.

jñānendriya (S), **gyānendriya** (H), **gyān indrī** (Pu) *Lit.* sense organ *(indriya)* of knowledge *(jñāna, gyān);* the five sense organs, these being the eyes, nose, ears, tongue and skin; the senses of seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting and feeling or touch. The *jñānendriyas* are so-called because they gather knowledge or experience of the world. Information is channelled through them. They are contrasted with the *karmendriyas,* or *indriyas* of action *(karma),* which are the motor faculties used in response to input from the senses or the direct promptings of the mind. Some commentators have also pointed out that the *indriyas* include the mental counterparts to the physical organs; they are not just the physical organ itself.

See also: **indriya, karmendriya**.

kāg (H/Pu), **kā'o** (H/P), **kawwā** (H/U) *Lit.* crow; an onomatopoeic word reflective of the call ('kaak') of the ubiquitous Indian crow; metaphorically, a contemptible, base or impudent person. Indian hooded crows, gregarious and living close to man, are often seen greedily and contentiously picking over the rubbish in a refuse dump. The term is hence used for the impure soul who lives the life of a scavenger in this world, eating any kind of rubbish it can find. The crow is often contrasted with the *haṃsa* (swan or white goose) whose mythological food is said to be pearls, and who is able to separate milk from water. Many mystics have used the term with these implications:

> It is by the power of the Name
> that a crow *(kāg)* becomes a swan *(haṃsa)*.
> Keep the soul steadfast in meditation,
> then the misery brought on by the three *guṇas* (attributes)
> will be relieved.
>
> *Charaṇdās, Bānī 2, Mishrit Shabd 5:2–3, CDB2 p.30*

The expression, *kāg gati,* meaning the status or characteristics *(gati)* of a crow *(kāg),* refers to the state of the worldly minded, as an incarnate soul lost in the physical universe.

See also: **bird**, **haṃsa**.

kāj (H/Pu) *Lit.* work, duty, occupation, task. Everyone in the world, by the very nature of life, is involved in some work or has some duties to perform. The mind is such that everyone finds something to occupy his time. This is taken by the individual as his daily work or duty *(kāj),* and most people become deeply identified with this work. They think, 'I' am a doctor, a housewife, a builder, a nun, a waiter, a nurse, an actor, a tramp – or any other occupation.

Mystics point out that whatever the outward activity in which a person is occupied, it is only the settlement of an old karmic debt. It is done because the unseen force of *karma* lies behind it. Mystics say that the real work of a human being is God-realization. The twentieth-century mystic, Sardār Bahādur Jagat Singh, explains:

> Earn wealth honestly and spend it well. It is meant for you. Attend to your work during the day. Day is for work. But at night give some time to devotion and contemplation. This is your real work. Just think for a moment. Of all that you do during the day, nothing of it is for yourself. Much that you do is for your family and friends. Daily you spend some time in adorning your body, but realize that even this is not yours and will not accompany you on your last journey. It will stay behind to be buried or cremated.
>
> Your own work is that of doing *simran* and *bhajan* (meditation practices) which will, in due course, liberate you from this vast prison in which you have been confined for countless ages. Life is short. Time is fleeting. Take full advantage of it, and if you have not done your own work already, start doing it now. Seek a true Master and, under His guidance, attach your soul to the Word and reach your true home.
>
> *Sardār Bahādur Jagat Singh, Science of the Soul I:7.4, SOS pp.84–85*

And Guru Arjun says:

> This human body has come to thy hand:
> this is thy chance to meet the Lord of the world *(Gobind)*.
> Other works *(kāj)* are of no avail to thee:
> joining the society of Saints, contemplate over the Name alone.
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 12, MMS*

See also: **kāraj**.

kamal(a) (S/H/Pu), **kanwal** (H/Pu) *Lit.* lotus; a term often used in Indian mystical expression to designate the subtle or mystic centres within the body below the eyes, as well as in the higher realms.

The term relates to the general impression given by these centres when seen within by yogis and mystics. The lotus, for example, has regular petals arranged around a central axis or pivot. Similarly, these subtle centres are points at which the central and vital current of the divine Life Stream is diversified into several functions. The centres are living, moving, organizing and patterning 'administrative' focuses, formed by the reflected and projected confluence of higher energies. Each 'petal' of a lotus represents an energetic aspect of that centre's formation and function.

The lotus has also been used in Indian mysticism as a symbol of perfect detachment, of maintaining contact with God while still living in this world. Its roots are in the mud while it opens pure white blossoms in the sunshine, above the water.

See also: **chakra**, **kamala** (▸2), **padma**.

kāmendriya (S), **kām indriya** (H), **kām indrī** (Pu) *Lit.* motor organ *(indriya)* of desire *(kām);* the generative organs; also, the mental faculty underlying the functioning of the generative organs.

See **indriya**.

kanj kanwal (H) *Lit.* lotus *(kanj)* lotus *(kanwal);* used by Kabīr for the *do dal kanwal* (two-petalled lotus) or *ājñā chakra* (command *chakra*) behind the eyes, one petal being white, the other black; the uppermost *chakra* and the focus of the mind in the human body:

> Above that (the throat centre), O brother, is the *kanj kanwal,*
> a dual-formed stage of black and white.
> There, behind the eyes, reigns the mind.
> *Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Bhed Bānī 22:8, KSS1 p.65*

See also: **ājñā chakra**, **chakra**.

kaṇṭh(a) chakra (S/H) *Lit.* throat *(kaṇṭh)* wheel *(chakra);* the throat centre or plexus. *Kaṇṭha* means throat, hence, windpipe, larynx or voice.

See also: **chakra**, **vishuddha chakra**.

kāraj (Pu) *Lit.* work, action, purpose, task, affair; from the Hindi and Sanskrit *kārya,* synonymous with *kāj,* meaning any type of work, affair or business; the Punjabi *kāraj* is generally used only for happy and auspicious occasions such as religious ceremonies, *yajñas* (open religious feasts), weddings and so forth; used in the *Ādi Granth* for spiritual pursuits and the spiritual goal or purpose of life. Guru Nānak says that to accomplish this spiritual purpose, the mind must be overcome:

> The mind dies not, so the work (*kāraj,* purpose) gets not accomplished:
> the mind is in the power of evil passions, evil intent and duality.
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 222, MMS*

Guru Arjun says that the purpose of life can be achieved by remembering God's Name:

> O my soul, grasp thou the support of one God:
> forsake the hope of another.
> Nānak, by pondering over the Name,
> the affairs *(kāraj)* are adjusted (the goal of life is fulfilled).
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 257, MMS*

See also: **kāj**.

kāraṇ(a) sharīr(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* causal *(kāraṇ)* body *(sharīr);* sometimes also called the mental body, acquired in *trikuṭī* (universal mind) on the soul's descent into the regions of the mind and associated with the causal mind *(kāraṇ man* or *nij man),* the two being so closely intertwined that they are hardly separable.

The *kāraṇa sharīra* acts as the soul's vehicle and means of communication in the causal realm. The causal region, and the associated causal body and mind, contain the most subtle forms of the causes of all actions, thoughts, energies and all other manifestations in the astral and physical realms. A perfect record of every experience of the individual, running through all the ages of his existence, is stored in the causal realm. The sum of all these experiences forms character; and from that character all actions flow. The past is all there as a visible record, while the future exists in seed form.

The fifth of the five *koshas* (*ānandamaya-kosha*, sheath of bliss) described in the *Upanishads* is sometimes equated with the causal body *(kāraṇa sharīra).*[1]

See also: **bīja sharīra**, **causal body**, **kāraṇ man**, **kosha**, **sharīra**.

1. *Paingala Upanishad* 2:5.

kāraṇ man (H/Pu) *Lit.* causal *(kāraṇ)* mind *(man);* that mind through which a soul functions in the causal realm; also called *nij man* (innermost mind). In each of the three realms (physical, astral and causal), the soul has a body, drawn from the substance of that region, together with a corresponding mind. Each body is an exteriorization or expression of its corresponding mind, both at the physical and higher levels. However, the *kāraṇ man* is so closely intertwined with the causal body *(kāraṇ sharīr)* that they are hardly separable. The three minds are actually parts or aspects of one mind, functioning at the different levels.

The deep impressions *(sanskāras)* and a complete record of the *karma* of countless past lives also resides in this area of the mind. It is here that the final purification of the mind takes place, before a soul is free to travel into the purely spiritual realms, leaving the mind with all its bodies and diversifications behind. This subtlest of subtle forms stores both the memory of all past lives, as well as the seeds of the future, and a soul who reaches this region can read them both at will.

See also: **kāraṇa sharīra**, **nij man**.

karmendriya (S/H), **karam indrī** (Pu) *Lit.* organs *(indriya)* of action *(karma);* the five modes of action and their respective motor organs; also, the mental counterpart to the five modes of action. The five motor *indriyas* are: the mouth (for speech), the hands (for manipulation and acquisition), the feet (for mobility and getting about), the rectum and anus (for elimination), and the organ of reproduction (for procreation). All bodily actions fall into these five broad categories.

See **indriya**.

kāyā (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* body, corporeality; hence, appearance. Mystics say that the real self is not the body. Even so, within the body, the immortal soul, the mind, God Himself and His entire creation are to be found. Guru Nānak likens the body to a palace or temple in which God dwells:

> This body *(kāyā)* is the mansion *(mahal),* temple *(mandar)*
> and home of God *(Hari ghar):*
> And into it He has enshrined His infinite light.
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1256, MMS*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh says that the "body *(kāyā)*" and everything else in normal human experience is "false", an illusion *(māyā).* Only the Master, association *(satsang)* with him, and the mystic Name *(Nām)* are true:

> False is the body *(kāyā),* false is *māyā,*
> false too is the mind, lured on by falsehood.
> True is the *satsang,* true the Master.
> The truth of the Name *(Nām):*
> how can it be described?
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 14:4.5–6, SBP p.111*

See also: **deh**, **nar deh**, **nar nārāyaṇī deh**, **tan**.

khāk (P) *Lit.* dust, earth; the lowest and densest of the four elements, according to Islamic thought. In Persian, the other three elements are *āb* (water), *ātish* (fire) and *bād* (air).

See also: **arbaʻ ʻanāṣir**.

khar (P) *Lit.* an ass; an idiot; a Sufi metaphor for the *nafs* (lower mind), as when Rūmī depicts a group of Sufis singing in jubilant chorus, "The ass is gone! The ass is gone!"[1] meaning that they have rid themselves of their lower or material nature. The familiar image of Jesus riding on an ass is also used by Rūmī to convey the idea of the spirit (Jesus) riding on the *nafs* (the donkey) – of having taken control over the *nafs*. Here, Rūmī refers to the *nafs* as the "nature *(ṭabʻ)*":

> Forsaking Jesus, you have fostered the ass *(khar):*
> of necessity, like the ass *(khar),* you are outside of the curtain.

Knowledge and *gnosis* are the fortune of Jesus;
They are not the fortune of the ass *(khar)*, O asinine one!
You listen to the moaning of the ass *(khar)*,
  and pity comes over you;
Then you know not that the ass *(khar)*
  commands you to be asinine.
Have pity on Jesus, and have no pity on the ass *(khar)*:
Do not make the (lower) nature *(ṭab')*
  lord over your intellect *('aql)*.
Let the (lower) nature *(ṭab')* weep sore and bitterly:
  take from it and pay the debt of the soul *(jān)*.

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:1850–54; cf. MJR2 p.316

Only when the higher mind *('aql)* controls the lower mind *(nafs)* can the soul or spirit *(jān)* be set free of the limitations of the body. The *'aql* has its source in the inner realms and its longing and tendency, when not controlled by the *nafs,* is inward and upward. Rūmī likens the *'aql* to an "elephant" who longs for the "land of Hindustan" whence it came. By contrast, the "ass *(khar)*" – the *nafs* – has no memory of or longing for any other place:

There must needs be the elephant,
  in order that, when he sleeps supinely,
  he may dream of the land of Hindustan.
The ass *(khar)* does not dream of Hindustan at all:
The ass *(khar)* has never journeyed
  from Hindustan to a foreign country.

Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:3068–69, MJR4 p.441

Rūmī also points out that the "ass *(khar)*" has no taste for the sweetness of "candy" or "sugar" – the blissful sweetness of the spirit:

Candy is not withheld from the ass *(khar)* of Jesus by him,
  but the ass *(khar)* is naturally pleased with straw.
If candy had roused delight in the ass *(khar)*,
  he (Jesus) would have poured hundredweights of sugar
  in front of the ass *(khar)*.

Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:161–62, MJR6 p.266

The *nafs* simply has to be controlled to set the higher mind and spirit free to ascend to realms of spiritual delight. Even the *nafs* or "ass *(khar)* of Jesus" – the *nafs* of the prophets – had no interest in spiritual uplift. It is not in its nature.

See also: **nafs**.

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* II:536, *MJR2* p.249.

khaṭ chakra (H), **khaṭ chakkar** (Pu), **shaḍ chakra** (S) *Lit.* six *(khaṭ, shash)* wheels *(chakras);* the six centres or plexuses of subtle energy and life force by which the physical body is maintained; the six subtle centres of *piṇḍa.*

See also: **chakra**.

khaṭ dal kamal (H/Pu), **khaṭ dal kanwal** (Pu), **shaḍ-dala-kamala** (S) *Lit.* six *(khaṭ, shash)* -petalled *(dal)* lotus *(kanwal, kamal);* the *svādhishṭhāna chakra,* the reproductive centre.

See **svādhishṭhāna chakra**.

khayāl (A/P), **khiyāl** (P) *Lit.* thought, imagination, fancy, fantasy, image; also, one of the five inner faculties of mind *(ḥawāss-i bāṭin),* according to Sufi psychology. Like the words 'thought' and 'imagination', *khayāl* has a wide spread of meaning, and is used in many contexts.

As one of the five mental faculties, Jurjānī explains that *khayāl* is that which takes the images that have been integrated by "the common sense *(ḥiss-i mushtarak)*", and stores them in a 'reservoir', so that they can be called up when required:

> *Khayāl* is an energy, keeping and protecting the images of tangible forms perceived by the common sense *(ḥiss-i mushtarak)* after these forms have gone. When the common sense thinks of or directs the attention towards the thought of those forms, their images can be seen. *Khayāl* is the reservoir of the common sense, and is located at the end of the first ventricle of the cerebrum.
>
> *Jurjānī, Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt, in FNI9 p.12*

Shabistarī explains *khayāl* as that part of the mind which not only retains images of past experiences, but also understands and recognizes what these images represent or mean:

> Its work is to retain the thought or image of whatever is perceived. For instance, if someone has seen a city, but has now left it, he can see the image of the city whenever he wishes, without the aid of physical eyes.

> *Khayāl*'s job is to understand what these images represent. It is like a writer who extracts meanings from the words of others. For those words to have any meaning, there must first have been someone to write them. The writer can then convey their meaning in the absence of those things. Naturally, his eye or another of his external senses must be be capable of sensing those things.
>
> *Shabistarī, Mir'āt al-Muḥaqqiqīn 1:14–24, GR p.355*

Khayāl is also used in a more general sense for thought, imagination, fancy and so on. Rūmī says that spiritual thoughts or fancies *(khayāl)* lead upward, while thoughts of the world lead downward. He depicts the spiritual seeker as a "sentry" keeping guard on the "heart", against the entry of "every unlovely fancy":

> A good fancy *(khayāl)* becomes one man's garden;
> An ugly fancy *(khayāl)* waylays another....
> The sentry of the heart, while on his round,
>   does not see from what corner of the soul *(jān)* the fancy *(khayāl)* comes.
> If he saw its rising place, he would contrive
>   to bar the way to every unlovely fancy *(khayāl)*.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:3043, 3046–47; cf. MJR4 p.171*

Rūmī also points out that the names or attributes by which God is described in scriptures can only give a person a *khayāl* – a shadowy, vague idea – of His nature. Reciting these phrases will not lead the soul to Him *(Hū)*:

> How can you be freed from selfish desires
>   without the cup of *Hū* –
> O you who have become content with no more of *Hū*
>   than the name of *Hū?*
> From attribute and name what comes to birth? – fantasy *(khayāl)*,
>   and that fantasy *(khayāl)* shows the way to union with Him....
> Have you ever come across a name
>   without the thing itself?
> Have you ever plucked a rose *(gul)*
>   from the (letters) *gāf* and *lām* of (the word) *gul?*
> You have pronounced the name:
>   go, seek the thing named.
> Know that the moon is on high,
>   not (its reflection) in the water of the stream.
> If you would pass beyond name and letter,
>   O make yourself wholly purged of self.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:3454, 3456–58; cf. MJR2 p.188*

He says that since names indicate the existence of something, names of God give rise to thoughts or fantasies concerning Him. But the soul should "seek the thing named", and not rest content with the name alone.

Khayāl is also described by Sufis as an essential characteristic of the world of patterns *('ālam-i miśāl),* alternatively translated as the world of likenesses, similitudes, image exemplars, blueprints or imagination. Mind and thought of the most subtle kind are the prevailing features of this heavenly world. It is from its subtle images, patterns or 'thoughts' that the physical world comes into being. Hence, Jāmī says:

> The plane of *khayāl* and all the forms that have taken shape there are real and valid as long as they are formed there under the influence of the higher plane of the lustrous heart rather than from a lower plane.
>
> This is because the *Umm al-Kitāb* (Mother of the Book, the creative Power) descends to the realm of the Well-Guarded Tablet *(al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ),* which serves as the heart of creation. From there, it descends to the *'ālam-i miśāl* (world of patterns), where it takes on form, and thence to the world of the senses, where it can be perceived. The world of the senses is the fourth stage in the descent from the higher to the lower, or from the inner to the outer, or from the world of divine knowledge to that of material existence.
>
> Human *khayāl* is therefore a restricted *'ālam-i miśāl,* while the *'ālam-i miśāl* itself is the absolute *khayāl,* the world of *khayāl* itself. Human *khayāl* thus has one face towards the *'ālam-i miśāl,* because that is its origin and it is joined to it; and one side towards the mind *(nafs)* and body.
>
> *Jāmī, Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ, NN p.157, in FN19 pp.15–16; cf. in SSE9 pp.8–9*

Ibn 'Arabī similarly depicts *khayāl* as the divine 'imagination' flowing out from the "world of pure meaning", infusing all creation down to the "tangible world". In this sense, the creation is essentially the imagination *(khayāl)* of God:

> *Khayāl* flows like a beneficial flood, and its command spreads over all the creation and enters into all the realities. It is the reality of giving power and form to the middle world and the reality of the isthmus between the world of pure meaning and the tangible world.
>
> *Ibn 'Arabī, in AMAS p.449, in FN19 p.13*

See also: **khayāl** (6.2).

kosh(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* sheath, scabbard, casing, box, covering. According to the *Upanishads,* an incarnate soul *(jīvātmā)* is wrapped in five sheaths or coverings. Strictly speaking, however, a *kosha* is neither a sheath nor a covering because the all-pervading *ātman* cannot really be covered by gross or subtle matter; it only appears to be so. The *ātman* remains apart from all the five sheaths, and is untouched by their qualities. Swāmī Nikhilānanda has given an excellent analysis of these *koshas:*

> *Vedānta* analyses the non-self into five *koshas* or sheaths, namely, the gross physical sheath *(annamaya-kosha),* the sheath of *prāṇa* or the vital force *(prāṇamaya-kosha),* the sheath of the mind *(manomaya-kosha),* the sheath of the *buddhi* or intelligence *(vijñānamaya-kosha),* and the sheath of bliss *(ānandamaya-kosha).* They are called sheaths because, like sheaths, they conceal *ātman* (the real self or soul). They are figuratively described as one inside the other, the physical sheath being the outermost and the sheath of bliss the innermost.
>
> The real meaning is that one sheath is finer than another. As a finer entity permeates a grosser one, so the finer sheath permeates the grosser sheath. Thus, when it is said that the sheath of the vital force is inside the gross physical sheath, it really means that the former is finer than the latter, and therefore permeates it. *Ātman* is the finest substance. It is detached from the sheaths, and permeates them all. The effulgence of *ātman* shines through all the sheaths, though in varying degrees according to their density. Thus, the sheath of intelligence manifests more of the luminosity of *ātman* than the sheath of the mind.
>
> Through ignorance, a man identifies *ātman* with one or more of the *koshas* or sheaths. As this ignorance is stubborn, persistent and hard to overcome, Vedantic philosophers take considerable pains to describe their illusory nature.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS pp.81–82*

The five sheaths are described in the *Taittirīya Upanishad:*

1. *Annamaya-kosha.* The sheath *(kosha)* filled with or made up of *(maya)* food *(anna).* This refers to the gross physical body, the most outward covering over the soul, which consists of and is fed by physical food or material substance. The *Taittirīya Upanishad* says:

> Whatever creatures live on earth
> are produced from food –
> By food alone, moreover, do they live,
> and to it, in the end, do they return.
> *Taittirīya Upanishad 2:2.1*

The physical body comes into existence out of the food assimilated by the father and is nourished in the womb by the food eaten by the mother. It continues in existence because of the food it eats, and after death it goes back to fertilize the earth, and become food for other bodies. Its origins, existence and end are all centred on food. Shankara writes:

> That which is born of food, which grows by food,
> and goes back to earth which is of the nature of food,
> is called the food sheath *(annamaya-kosha)* –
> This is the gross body.
>
> *Shankara, Tattvabodha 5:1, TBS p.35*

Swāmī Nikhilānanda distinguishes this sheath from the real self:

> This sheath, which constitutes the gross physical body, is produced by the combination of the gross elements and consists of flesh, bones, blood and other ingredients. Dependent upon food for its existence, it lives as long as it can assimilate food. It is not seen prior to birth or after death; its existence is transitory and its virtues are ephemeral. It is changeable by nature. Therefore, the body cannot be the self. The ignorant identify themselves with the body; the book-learned, with the combination of the body, the mind and the self; while the calm man of discrimination regards the self as distinct from body, mind and ego. As long as a man does not give up this mistaken identification with the body, he cannot experience the bliss of (spiritual) freedom, be he ever so erudite in philosophy or science. The body can be a help to the soul if it is regarded as an instrument, just as a house is a help to its indweller or a horse to its rider.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS p.82*

2. *Prāṇamaya-kosha.* The sheath filled with or made up of *prāṇa* or subtle life energy, also called vital life force or vital breath. It refers to the subtle or etheric counterpart of the gross physical body that provides the underlying and hidden energy and integrated organization necessary for life processes to continue. There are said to be five forms of pranic energy, corresponding to the five primary essences of matter *(tattvas).* According to Shankara, the five motor *indriyas* (motor faculties) are a part of this *kosha.*[1] The *Taittirīya Upanishad* says:

> Distinct from and within this self,
> which consists of the essence of food,
> there is is another self, consisting of *prāṇa*.
> By this, the former is filled.

This, too, has a human form.
Like the human shape of the former
is the human shape of the latter.

Taittirīya Upanishad 2:2.2

The *prāṇamaya-kosha* has the "shape of a man" in the sense that it pervades the gross physical form just as fluid fills a mould. Swāmī Nikhilānanda also differentiates between this covering and the *ātman:*

> This sheath is finer than the gross physical sheath, and impels the latter to action. A modification of the vital force, it consists of the five *prāṇas,* enters the body after conception, leaves it at the hour of death.... An insentient and limited object, the sheath of *prāṇa* cannot be *ātman,* the omnipresent and all-seeing witness.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS p.82*

3. *Manomaya-kosha.* The sheath filled with or consisting of the mind *(manas). Manas* is that part of the human mind which contains the five perceptual faculties. It is thus the receiver of all sensory impressions from without. It is also the seat of emotions and feelings. The *Taittirīya Upanishad* says:

This (sheath of the *prāṇa*)
is the embodied self of the former (the sheath of food).
Distinct from and within this self,
which consists of the essence of *prāṇa,*
is another self, consisting of the mind *(manomaya-kosha).*
By this, the former is filled.
This, too, has a human form.
Like the human shape of the former
is the human shape of the latter.

Taittirīya Upanishad 2:3.2

The *manas* is also said to have the shape of a man since the mind pervades the body giving life and direction to the *prāṇas.* Once again, Swāmī Nikhilānanda comments:

> This is finer than the sheath of *prāṇa.* The self identified with the mind feels the diversity of 'I' and 'you', and also experiences the differences of names and forms in the outer world. The seedbed of desires, good and bad, the mind impels the senses to activity for their fulfilment. The phenomenal world has no existence outside the mind, which is a product of ignorance. The mind agitated by desires becomes

> aware of sense objects, gross and fine, enjoys them, and also becomes attached to them. The mind alone is responsible for the illusory differences of caste and social position, as also of the notions of action, means and end. Stained by passion, greed and lust, it creates bondage, and freed of them, it shows the way to liberation and blessedness. The purification of the mind, through the practice of discrimination and dispassion, is the goal of spiritual discipline. In the opinion of Vedantic seers, the mental sheath cannot be *ātman,* because it is endowed with a beginning and an end, is subject to change, and is characterized by pain and pleasure.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS pp.82–83*

4. *Vijñānamaya-kosha.* The sheath filled with or consisting of knowledge *(vijñāna)* or intelligence *(buddhi),* referring to that part of the human mind which contains the faculties of intellect. The *Taittirīya Upanishad* says:

> Distinct from and within this (sheath of the *manas*),
>   which consists of the essence of the mind,
>   is another self, consisting of intellect *(vijñāna).*
> By this, the former is filled.
> This, too, has a human form.
> Like the human shape of the former
>   is the human shape of the latter.
>
> *Taittirīya Upanishad 2:4.2*

This covering is actually another aspect of the human mind or *antaḥkaraṇa.* Swāmī Nikhilānanda indicates that this, too, is not the *ātman* or real self:

> *Buddhi,* the determinative faculty, is, like the mind, a function of the inner organ and therefore a product of *prakṛiti* or matter. Though insentient by nature, it appears intelligent and conscious because it reflects *chit* or pure intelligence. This reflection of pure consciousness in *buddhi* is called the *jīva,* or individualized soul, whose chief characteristic is I-consciousness. Subject to the law of *karma,* it assumes different bodies, determined by the desires of previous births, and performs good and evil actions.
>
> *Ātman,* identifying itself with the sheath of intelligence, experiences misery and happiness in the waking and dream states and their absence in dreamless sleep.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS p.83*

5. *Ānandamaya-kosha.* The sheath filled with or made up of bliss *(ānanda),* referring to that which lies beyond the confines of the human mind. This

would include the astral and perhaps the causal bodies. Picturing the human body as a bird, the *Taittirīya Upanishad* says:

> Distinct from and within this *(vijñānamaya-kosha),*
> which consists of the essence of the intellect,
> is another self, consisting of bliss *(ānanda).*
> By this, the former is filled.
> This, too, has a human form.
> Like the human shape of the former
> is the human shape of the latter.
> Its head is love *(priyam),*
> its right wing (arm) is joy *(moda),*
> its left wing (arm) is delight *(pramoda),*
> its trunk is bliss;
> Its tail is *Brahman,* its support.
>
> *Taittirīya Upanishad 2:5.2*

The *Taittirīya Upanishad* then goes on to point out that *Brahman* or ultimate Reality lies beyond these sheaths or coverings over the soul. Thus, the first four *koshas* relate to gross and subtle aspects of a human being, while the fifth is left indeterminate as regards its precise meaning. It is simply that which lies beyond the physical body. Swāmī Nikhilānanda again points out that this *kosha* is not the *ātman* itself:

> Finer than the sheath of intelligence is the subtle sheath of bliss. This bliss, however, must not be confused with the supreme bliss of *Brahman.* A modification of nescience (spiritual ignorance) or *prakṛiti,* it manifests itself by catching a reflection of the ever blissful *ātman.* The chief features of this sheath are pleasure and rest – the pleasure that is experienced when one comes in contact with an agreeable object....
>
> The sheath of bliss, though close to *ātman,* cannot be *ātman* itself, as it is a product of ignorance.... Further, this sheath, like the other sheaths, is endowed with changing attributes. But *ātman* is omnipresent and self-existent.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS p.85*

Other *Upanishads* say that the *annamaya-kosha* comprises the gross physical body *(sthūla sharīra),* the sheaths of *prāṇa, manas* and *vijñāna (buddhi)* make up the subtle body *(sūkshma sharīra* or *linga sharīra),* while the sheath of *ānanda* refers to the causal body *(kāraṇa sharīra).* The writer of the *Paingala Upanishad,* for instance, describes the physically incarnate soul *(jīvātmā)* as being wrapped in five sheaths or coverings *(koshas)* which he equates with these three bodies:

> The material sheath is what is produced
> only out of the essence of food,
> developed out of the essence of food
> and, made of the essence of food, dissolves in earth.
> That alone is the gross body *(annamaya-kosha).*
>
> The five *prāṇas* along with the organs of action *(karmendriyas)*
> make up the sheath of *prāṇa (prāṇamaya-kosha).*
> The mind, together with the organs of perception *(jñānendriyas),*
> comprise the mental sheath *(manomaya-kosha).*
> The intellect, together with the organs of perception *(jñānendriyas),*
> comprise the sheath of intelligence *(vijñānamaya-kosha).*
> This triad of sheaths comprise the subtle body *(linga sharīra).*
>
> Knowledge *(jñāna)* of one's own nature *(svarūpa)*
> is the *ānandamaya-kosha.*
> That is the causal body *(kāraṇa sharīra).*
>
> *Paingala Upanishad 2:5; cf. PU pp.910, TMU pp.36, 227*

The true subtle or astral body lies beyond the faculties of the human or *piṇḍī* (physical) mind, while the causal body lies deeper still, in the higher reaches of consciousness. But the integration of the causal, astral and physical bodies is hard to understand intellectually, and there are variations in the way things get described. It is, however, sometimes said that the subtle faculties, functions and energies of a human being, including the six bodily *chakras* and the *prāṇas,* comprise the astral body. The reason is that the higher is always reflected in the lower and, as a consequence, the one can readily be mistaken for the other.

'Ināyat Khān also points out that the *prāṇamaya-kosha* is a part of the physical body:

> (There are) five bodies considered by the mystics of old to be the vehicles of the soul. These are called: *ānandamaya-kosha,* the body of joy; *vijñānamaya-kosha,* body of wisdom; *manomaya-kosha,* body of mind; *prāṇamaya-kosha,* body of ether; *annamaya-kosha,* body of earth. This last is the receptacle of food. It lives on earthly food, and if it is starved of that it dies, for it is made of earth; it lives on earth. The one which is the receptacle of ether, and which is called *prāṇamaya-kosha* is made of *prāṇa,* and dies if it is deprived of that.... These two bodies form the material part, the physical part, of man's being.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK9 p.219*

Saints generally speak of many veils or coverings on the soul, pointing out that they are all aspects of the multifaceted mind, expressing itself at the physical, astral and causal levels. Tulsīdās, for example, says:

> With consciousness dimmed under the influence of *māyā* (illusion),
> the soul indeed is miserable.
> Many kinds of veil are placed
> around the innermost core (of the soul).
>
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 7:72.4, RCM p.1099*

See also: **sharīra**.

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1. Shankara, *Tattvabodha* 5:2.

kuṇḍalinī (S/H) *Lit.* coiled up; the pranic energy situated at the *mūlādhāra* or *ādhāra chakra* (rectal centre) described in yogic and tantric texts as coiled in three and a half coils, lying at the opening of the *sushumṇā,* the central *nāḍī* or channel of *prāṇa,* the subtle life energy that brings life and energy to the body. When the *kuṇḍalinī* is awakened and moved by the practice of *haṭha yoga, prāṇa* is able to enter the opening to the *sushumṇā,* and rise up through the *chakras* to the eye centre. Metaphorically, *kuṇḍalinī* is often described as a serpent goddess lying asleep in the *mūlādhāra chakra,* guarding the entrance or mouth of the *sushumṇā.*

The *Shiva Saṃhitā* describes the *kuṇḍalinī* and the *ādhāra chakra:*

> Two finger breadths above the rectum and two finger breadths below the (sex) organ is the *ādhāra* lotus, having a dimension of four finger breadths.
>
> Surrounding the *ādhāra* lotus, there is a triangular, beautiful *yoni* (force centre), hidden and kept secret in all the *Tantras* (esoteric texts).
>
> In it is the supreme goddess *kuṇḍalinī* in the form of a lightning flash, in a coil. It has three and a half coils (like a serpent), and is in the mouth of the *sushumṇā.*
>
> It represents the creative force of the world, constantly engaged in creation. It is the goddess of speech, whom speech cannot manifest, and who is praised by all the gods.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 2:21–24; cf. SSV pp.18–19*

Kuṇḍalinī has been called by a variety of names. Thus, the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* says:

> *Kuṭilāngī* (crooked-bodied), *kuṇḍalinī, bhujangī* (a she-serpent), *shakti, īshvarī, kuṇḍalī, arundhatī* are all synonymous terms.
>
> *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā 3:97; cf. HYP p.43*

Other names include *nāgin* (female serpent). *Kuṇḍalinī* is also one of the many names of *Durgā,* who is herself an aspect of *Shakti. Kuṇḍalinī* is itself a form of *shakti* (energy), illustrating how Hinduism intertwines the vocabularies of spiritual practice and mythology.

See also: **kuṇḍalinī yoga** (▸2), **sushumṇā** (4.1).

lāhūt, al- (A/P) *Lit.* godhead, divinity, deity *(lāhūt).* In general usage, *lāhūt* refers to that which is divine. For example, a *lāhūtī* is a theologian; *'ilm al-lāhūt* (knowledge of the divine) is theology. *Lāhūt* refers to the divine aspect of man, in contrast with the limited aspect of man, *nāsūt* or human nature. *Lāhūt* and *nāsūt* are hence used to express man's dual nature. According to Ibn 'Arabī:

> The universal Life which flows through all is called the divine aspect *(lāhūt)* of Being, while the one to whom that Spirit gives life is called the human aspect *(al-nāsūt).* The human aspect, too, may be regarded as spirit, but only by virtue of that which maintains it in existence.
>
> *Ibn 'Arabī, Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam, FH p.138; cf. WP p.69*

In a tale recounted in Rūmī's *Maśnavī,* Moses rebukes a shepherd for his simple and rustic manner of praising the Lord. The shepherd suffers great remorse, but the Lord raises him to the heights of spiritual union. Later, the shepherd says to Moses, "The divine nature *(lāhūt)* has become intimate with my human nature *(nāsūt).*" He means that the divine and the human have come together, and become one within himself:

> I have passed beyond the Lote Tree of the uttermost limit,
> I have gone a hundred thousand years' journey on the other side.
> You plied the lash: my horse shied,
> made a bound, and passed beyond the sky.
> The divine nature *(lāhūt)* has become intimate
> with my human nature *(nāsūt)* –
> Blessings be on your hand and your arm!
> Now my state is beyond telling:
> this which I am telling is not my (real) state.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:1788–91; cf. MJR2 p.313*

The shepherd says that he has gone beyond the "sky *('arsh)*" and beyond the "Lote Tree of the uttermost limit *(Sidrat al-muntahá)*", both technical terms for points on the spiritual journey.

The term *lāhūt* also appears in *'ālam al-lāhūt* (world of divinity), usually referring to the eternal realm or Godhead, but sometimes to some other region. It is also used by some *faqīrs* as a name for *sirr-i ẕikr* (secret repetition), a form of mystic repetition only revealed to the seeker after ascension to the inner realms.

See also: **'ālam al-lāhūt** (2.1).

lamp Mystically, the lamp or light of the soul, as in Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish virgins.[1] Those who prepare themselves for the Lord's coming by 'putting oil in their lamps', making them shine, are those who practise meditation. Spiritual practice is the oil which makes the lamp of the soul glow. The metaphor is common in early Christian and Manichaean writings, as in the Manichaean psalm which clearly alludes to Jesus' parable:

> Let us also, my brethren, put oil in our lamps
> until our Lord passes in.
> Let us not slumber and sleep until our Lord takes us across, …
> and we go within the bride chamber and reign with him,
> all of us together.
> *Psalms of Heracleidēs, Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.193*

The "bride chamber" refers to eternity, where the soul attains union with the Divine. In another passage, the "lamp" is again the soul, and the "bride chambers" are the spiritual regions:

> [My lamp] shines like the sun,
> I have lighted it, O Bridegroom,
> with the excellent oil of purity….
> [I am] a maiden [unspotted and holy],
> making music to you, my Saviour….
> Christ, take me into your bride chambers….
> Let me rejoice in all the bride chambers,
> and give me the crown of the Holy Ones.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXIII; cf. MPB pp.79–80*

The same metaphor appears in Mandaean literature:

Good one! Rise to the house of Life!
And go to the everlasting abode!
They will hang your lamp among lamps of light.

Mandaean Prayer Book 92; cf. CPM pp.96–97

See also: **oil** (▸2), **Oil** (3.1), **Bridegroom** (▸2).

1. *Matthew* 1:13.

laṭā'if (A/P) (sg. *laṭīfah*) *Lit.* subtle things, subtleties; subtle substances. Hujwīrī explains that a *laṭīfah* is a real, though subtle, substance:

> Both the lower soul *(nafs)* and the spirit *(rūḥ)* are subtle things *(laṭā'if)* existing in the body, just as devils and angels and paradise and hell exist in the universe; but the one is the seat of good while the other is the seat of evil.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV:6, KM p.196*

In Sufi literature, the *laṭā'if* generally refer to the subtle centres in the body, as described by many of the Sufi schools, equivalent to the *chakras* of Hindu description. The *laṭā'if* are variously translated as subtle organs, subtle faculties or subtle things.

These centres are subtle energy focuses in the human microcosm *('ālam al-ṣaghīr)*. Although many Sufis have referred to the *laṭā'if*, consistent terminology has not been used for describing or naming them. Śanī and others have mentioned five *laṭā'if* in the physical body, and five in the higher worlds. Four of the lower centres are each associated with an element and an angel, plus *Ādam*. In ascending order, the lower five are: earth *(Ādam)*, water *(Mīkhā'īl)*, fire *(Isrāfīl)*, air *(Jabra'īl)* and, at the top, the *laṭīfah al-nafs*, situated in the forehead between the two eyebrows. The five *laṭā'if* in the higher worlds are called, in ascending order: heart *(qalb)*, spirit *(rūḥ)*, secret *(sirr)*, hidden *(khafī)*, and most hidden *(akhfā)*.[1]

Other Sufis have described just one set of six *laṭā'if (laṭā'if sittah)*, extending from the physical body to the highest Reality. Najm al-Dīn Kubrá (*d.*1220) and 'Alā' al-Dawlah Simnānī (*d.*1336) named them, in ascending order: *qālabīyah* (of the subtle body), *nafsīyah* (of the *nafs*), *qalbīyah* (of the heart), *sirrīyah* (of the *sirr*, the secret, sometimes translated as innermost consciousness), *rūḥīyah* (of the spirit), *khafīyah* (of the arcanum, the profound and secretly divulged mystery), and *Ḥaqqīyah* (of the Truth, Reality).[2] In this system, the *qālabīyah* (subtle body) corresponds to the physical body below the forehead; *nafsīyah* is located in the forehead, and the others are above that, in the higher worlds.

Simnānī also associated each of these subtle centres with a biblical personality. Starting with Adam at the lowest centre, he associates Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus with each of the succeeding *laṭīfah*, and Muḥammad with the highest, *Ḥaqqīyah*. This is "the point connected with the divine Reality". He who reaches the *Ḥaqqīyah* after passing the *rūḥī* centre of David and the *khafī* centre of Jesus is a "true Mohammedan".[3]

The six *laṭā'if* are also associated with various parts of the physical body, ranging from the bowels up to the forehead.

See also: **chakra**, **al-darajāt al-suflá**.

1. See T.C. Rastogi, *Sufism, SD* p.33; Mīr Valī al-Dīn, *Contemplative Disciplines in Sufism, CDS* p.63*ff.*
2. See Hugh Urban, "The Heart: the Eye and the Temple of the Imaginal", in *HETI* p.33.
3. See Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam, MDI* p.379.

laṭīfah al-insānīyah, al- (A), **laṭīfah-'i insānī** (P) *Lit.* the subtle centre *(laṭīfah)* of human-ness *(insānīyah);* the subtle centre of intrinsic human nature, having two contrary aspects: towards the spirit and towards sensual desires. The upward tendency is called *fu'ād* (soul, mind); the downward tendency is called *ṣadr* (*lit.* returning). The *laṭīfah al-insānīyah* is said to be located in the spiritual heart *(dil),* the place of revelations *(vaḥy-i dil).*

Many mystics have said something similar. Plotinus says that when the divine emanation descended to the physical plane and took its place in a human form, it had two aspects, one looking up and the other looking down.[1] Indian mystics speak of the higher mind that yearns to return to its source in the universal mind, while the *piṇḍī* or physical human mind is concerned entirely with living in the material world. In Sufi terminology, *al-laṭīfah al-insānīyah* corresponds to *'aql* (higher mind) and *nafs* (lower mind) taken together. In Sufi literature, *'aql* is generally portrayed with an upward tendency, while the *nafs* pulls downward.

See also: **'aql**, **nafs**.

1. *e.g.* Plotinus, *Enneads* 5:3.3.

life, **life eternal**, **life everlasting** The eternal, mystic nature of the soul; the eternal life or existence of the soul. The nature of life is essentially mystical; life is being and consciousness, which have their source in God – the ocean of Life, Being and Consciousness. God projects life into creation through His Word *(Logos)* or Life Force. This is explained in the prologue to John's gospel:

All things were made by it (the *Logos*),
  and without it was not any thing made that was made.
In it was life:
  and life was the light of men.

John 1:3–4; cf. KJV, TYN

Again in St John, Jesus explains exactly what he means by "life eternal". It is coming to know the "only true God":

This is life eternal:
  that they might know Thee, the only true God.

John 17:3, KJV

There are also many places in St John where Jesus says that "life eternal" or "everlasting life" can only be had from the "Only-begotten Son" – meaning the *Logos,* the first emanation of the divine Father, personified in Jesus:

For God so loved the world,
  that He gave his Only-begotten Son,
  that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,
  but have everlasting life.

John 3:16, KJV

And:

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life:
  and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life;
But the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 3:36, KJV

To "perish" and to be subject to the "wrath of God" both imply separation from God, subject to the cares and pains of living in the creation.

Jesus also points out, according to St John, that people generally think that by following a religion based upon sacred books, they will gain "eternal life". But they do not understand the meaning of the term. "Life", he says to the Jews, can be had from "me" – from Jesus as the personification of the *Logos:*

Search the scriptures,
  for in them ye think ye have eternal life:
And they are they which testify of me.
And ye will not come to me,
  that ye might have life.

John 5:39–40, KJV

He means that the books held sacred by the Jews speak of the mystic path of "eternal life" and of the prophets or Messengers of God. These "scriptures ... testify of me", as they do of all prophets, for it is through the prophets that "eternal life" is attained. Jesus says that he has the power to bestow true "eternal life", but that the people are so locked into their religious beliefs that they cannot see this. As he said in conversation with the lady at Jacob's well:

> Whosoever drinketh of the water
>   that I shall give him shall never thirst;
> But the water that I shall give him
>   shall be in him a well of water
>   springing up into everlasting life.
>
> *John 4:14, KJV*

The "water" of which he speaks is the Living Water, a metaphor for the Word which gives "everlasting life". Again in St John, Jesus says that "life eternal" is attained by detachment from "life in this world":

> He that loveth his life shall lose it;
> And he that hateth his life in this world
>   shall keep it unto life eternal.
>
> *John 12:25, KJV*

He means that whoever loves his life in this world and is deeply attached to it will lose his life, in the sense that he will remain absorbed with this world of death, thereby losing the opportunity to find true eternal life. But he that "hateth his life in this world", who detaches himself from everything, will find "life eternal". The writer of this gospel seems to have a passage from *Proverbs* in mind:

> For the man who finds me finds life,
>   he will win favour from *Yahweh;*
> But he who does injury to me does hurt to his own soul,
>   all who hate me are in love with death.
>
> *Proverbs 8:35–36, JB*

Among the Mandaeans, the Supreme Being was also called Life, Great Life, First Life, and other similar names. This group dates probably back to the time of John the Baptist, and is one of the few gnostic sects to have survived into the present century, living an isolated existence in the marshlands of the Tigris and Euphrates delta. Their writings are intriguing and are clearly of great antiquity, though now enshrined in their prayer book and other texts.

A large number of examples of the use of these terms are found there, many of them being prefaced with the refrain: "In the name of Life" and ending, "Life is victorious!"

See also: **Life** (2.1), **'olam** (2.1).

light-nature See **nature of light**.

ling(a) chakra (S/H) *Lit.* phallus *(linga) chakra;* an alternative name for the *svādhishṭhāna chakra.*

See **svādhishṭhāna chakra**.

líng hún (líng hún) (C) *Lit.* spiritual *(líng)* soul *(hún);* the common Chinese expression for soul, regarded as universal spirit *(shén)* expressed through the individual. *Shén* combines with *ch'ì* (breath, life force) to give consciousness and life to the body.

According to Chinese philosophy, the *líng hún* or the soul of a being is comprised of two distinct qualities or aspects: *p'ò* and *hún,* which combine as *líng hún* at the moment of conception and then separate at death. *P'ò* is that aspect of soul that is physical or sentient, arising from the earth. It is *yīn* in nature, therefore passive, regulating the lower mental and bodily functions. *Hún* is that aspect of soul that is spiritual and descends from Heaven. *Hún* is *yáng* in nature, active, and concerns the higher physical and mental functions. Although joined at conception, the *p'ò* and *hún* separate at death, *p'ò* staying on the earth, while *hún* returns to Heaven. The relationship between the two aspects of *líng hún* is depicted by the common expression, *'hún fēi p'ò sàn',* meaning 'the rising of the *hún* to Heaven and the scattering of the *p'ò*' – which means to be frightened out of one's wits!

It is believed that when a person is severely ill or faints or otherwise loses consciousness, the *hún* part of the soul has partially left the body, assuming another shape, body or aspect. The popular Chinese practice of *chào hún* or recalling the *hún* is intended to try and coax the heavenly aspect of the soul fully back into the body in order to restore health or consciousness. This is typically performed by a loved one who wanders the streets at dark with a lantern, and calling for the 'lost soul' to come home.

In the case of someone who has suffered a violent death, the soul is suddenly disengaged from the body and the *p'ò* quality of soul is believed to be in a disoriented state, becoming a ghost *(kuǐ). Chào hún* is practised in order to help guide the *p'ò* aspect of soul back to its body, so that it can then move on to its proper place in the afterlife. The practice of *chào hún*, together with the belief that once the body is destroyed the soul cannot be properly guided, may account for the Chinese custom of burial rather than cremation.

See also: **ch'ì**, **hsīn**, **hún**, **kuǐ** (4.2), **p'ò**, **shén**.

mahāvākya (S/H), **mahāvāk** (H/Pu) *Lit.* great *(mahā)* saying or utterance *(vākya, vāk)*. Four *mahāvākyas* are considered to be the most significant sayings in the teachings of the *Upanishads*, each reiterating the unity of the soul *(ātman)* and *Brahman*, and regarded as the four principal pillars of *Advaita Vedānta*. Taking one from each of the four *Vedas*, they are:

1. *Prajñanaṃ Brahman:* "Consciousness is *Brahman*" (*Ṛig Veda, Aitareya Upanishad* 3:1.3).
2. *Tat tvam asi:* "Thou art That" (*Sāma Veda, Chhāndogya Upanishad* 6:8.7).
3. *Ayam ātmā Brahma:* "This self is *Brahman*" (*Atharva Veda, Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* 2; also in *Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 2:5.19).
4. *Ahaṃ Brahmāsmi:* "I am *Brahman*" (*Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 1:4.10).

The *mahāvākyas* are also used as *mantras* to concentrate the mind, the idea being that by constant mental repetition of the statement, realization will be gained of the reality underlying it. The practice is somewhat similar to that of trying to impress upon oneself, by mental or intellectual effort alone, that the soul is one with God. Such a practice, however, does not take the mind and soul into the inner realms where mystic realization is to be found, though it may detach the mind to some extent from the world, depending upon the ability of the practitioner to concentrate the mind upon the *mantra*. Mystics point out that simply repeating the recipe for a cake will not result in a baked cake that can be eaten and enjoyed.

Some scholars and philosophers have maintained that the number of *mahāvākyas* is not four, but twelve, including other sayings from the *Vedas* which convey similar truths. Others have debated which four sayings best fit the description of *mahāvākya*. For example, *"Sarvaṃ khalvidaṃ Brahma"* – "All this (this whole world) is *Brahman*"[1] – is sometimes quoted. Since the selection of such *mahāvākyas* is unlikely to have been in the minds of the original writers of the *Upanishads*, they must have originated in later tradition and from later teachers who wished to emphasize the fundamental realities of existence, as taught in the *Upanishads*.

1. *Chhāndogya Upanishad* 3:14.1.

makar(a) (S/H/Pu) A sea monster from Hindu mythology, with the head and forelegs of a deer and the tail of a fish; the mount of the sea god, *Varuṇa;* the emblem on the banner of *Kāmadeva,* the goddess of love; the symbol of the sign of Capricorn in the Hindu zodiac; esoterically, a symbol for the sex *chakra,* associated with the water *tattva;* sometimes depicted inaccurately as a crocodile.

See also: **svādhishṭhāna chakra**.

makhlūq (A/P) *Lit.* created being, creature; derived from *khalq* (creation); Rūmī says that God's creatures are connected to Him:

> No created being *(makhlūq)* is without connection to Him,
> but that connection *(ta'alluq)* is indescribable, O uncle!
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:3695; cf. MJR4 p.475, in SPL p.44*

The *khalq* (creation) and the *makhlūq* (creature) have their source in the Creator out of whom they came. The connection between Creator and created is, according to mystics, indescribable; it must be experienced through mystic practice.

See also: **al-khalq** (4.1).

man Man or woman, as opposed to an animal or other species; a human being, the human form. Mystically, the human form has commonly been designated the highest form in creation because only as a human being can the soul begin the journey back to God. The souls incarnated in the various species of the physical creation represent a wide spectrum of consciousness with man at the top and the species of the vegetable kingdom at the bottom. But, as it says in one of the psalms:

> What is man, that You are mindful of him?
> And the son of man, that You visit him?
> For You have made him a little lower than the angels *(elohim),*
> and have crowned him with glory and honour.
> *Psalm 8:5–6, JCL*

Man is endowed with the faculties of discrimination and foresight, enabling him to distinguish right from wrong and to plan for the future. The highest use of these faculties enables him to make suitable preparations for his inevitable death by following the path in life which leads to God, the supreme good. Metaphorically, man has eaten from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and in that sense has the capacity to make a choice in all his actions. But he is so hedged in on all sides by circumstance and destiny that his only real choice lies within himself: he can move towards God or towards the world. As Jesus said:

> No man can serve two masters:
> For either he will hate the one, and love the other;
> Or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.
> Ye cannot serve God and mammon.
>
> *Matthew 6:24, KJV*

Man has this much free will: to seek God or to deny Him. His free will is deeply conditioned by his past, thus determining his present; but however submerged his ability to choose may be, mystics say that man has been created with the dispensation and blessing of being able to seek the Divine. This is God's purpose in creating the human form.

None of the other species have this privilege. They are creatures of instinct. The lower in the order they are, the less is their degree of consciousness, and the more are they entirely hemmed in by preprogrammed instincts. Their mental apparatus is different from that of man. The soul is the same, but the overcoat and other garments that surround it are constituted differently. Their mental, sensory and bodily 'configurations' are different.

Many mystics have spoken of the unique potential of the human form. *Genesis* describes man as being made in the "image of God", meaning that man's real spiritual essence is that of God:

> And God said:
> "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." …
> So God created man in His own image,
> in the image of God created He him.
>
> *Genesis 1:26–27, KJV*

In a second creation story, *Genesis* goes on to describe God as forming man (Adam) by breathing the "Breath of Life", the creative Power, into the "dust of the ground":

> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the Breath of Life: and man became a living soul.
>
> *Genesis 2:7, KJV*

As a dweller in matter, man has often been described as being fashioned of clay or dust or earth. Paul describes man as an "earthen vessel":

> But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.
>
> *2 Corinthians 4:7, KJV*

Finding oneself as a human being, therefore, is said to be a precious opportunity, not to be wasted, and expressions of man's pre-eminence are found in many religious traditions. Indian sacred writings say that gods and goddesses long to take birth as human beings. Islam holds man to be the *ashraf al-makhlūqāt* – the noblest of all created beings.

Among the pre-Christian Judaic wisdom literature, Jesus ben Sirach – alluding to the *Genesis* story – explains that God made man "in His own image", putting "His own light in their hearts", so that they could worship Him. He also says that it is only in human form that the soul can come into contact with the Voice of God:

> The Lord fashioned man from the earth,
> to consign him back to it.
> He gave them so many days' determined time,
> he gave them authority over everything on earth.
> He clothed them with strength like His own,
> and made them in His own image.
>
> He filled all living things with dread of man,
> making him master over beasts and birds.
> He shaped for them (men) a mouth and tongue, eyes and ears,
> and gave them a heart to think with.
> He filled them with knowledge and understanding,
> and revealed to them good and evil.
>
> He put His own light in their hearts
> to show them the magnificence of His works.
> They will praise His Holy Name,
> as they tell of His magnificent works.
>
> He set knowledge before them,
> He endowed them with the Law of Life.
> He established an eternal Covenant with them,
> and revealed His judgments to them.
> Their eyes saw His glorious majesty,
> and their ears heard the glory of His Voice.
>
> *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach 17:13, JB*

The physical aspects of the human form, he says, are drawn from material substance, and to it, they return. The span of a human life is destined – the Lord "gave them so many days' determined time". But man is the highest of all created forms on earth. He has a natural dominion over all other forms owing to his higher degree of consciousness. In fact, he has the "strength" of God. He is made "in His own image" – the real self of man is the same as the true Self of God.

Though sharks, crocodiles and other such creatures may not be filled "with dread of man", most higher creatures, especially birds and mammals, seem to instinctively recognize something of man's dominion. He has a discriminating "heart to think with": his mind, which gives him his moral conscience, and a natural awareness of "good and evil" – of what is right and what is wrong. He has the potential for knowledge and understanding – both human and divine.

God's "own light" is within the human form. "He put His own light in their hearts" through which the whole of creation can be comprehended. The human form is a microcosm of being, while the Lord is the ocean of Being, the Supreme Being, the macrocosm. It is through the "Holy Name", the Word, the "Law of Life", that man can come to know the mysteries of God and His creation.

This is God's "eternal Covenant" with man. This is the way He has created things, so that the inner eyes of a soul in human form may see "His glorious majesty" and, says Jesus ben Sirach, keeping the most significant line until the last, that they may hear the "glory of His Voice".

The pre-Christian Judaic psalms, commonly attributed to the *Ẓaddik* or Teacher of Righteousness and found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in caves near the ruins of Khirbet Qumran, also speak in many places of the great blessing given to man. "Man," says the ancient and unnamed writer, is the "spirit of flesh," an "edifice of dust … kneaded with water." Yet he is made able to "comprehend the great design of Thy Wisdom", Wisdom being an ancient Middle Eastern term for the Creative Word:

> But what is the spirit of flesh
>   that it should understand all this?
> And that it should comprehend
>   the great design of Thy Wisdom?
> What is he that is born of woman
>   in the midst of all Thy terrible works?
> He is but an edifice of dust,
>   and a thing kneaded with water;
> Whose beginning is sinful iniquity,
>   and shameful nakedness,
>   and a fount of uncleanness,
>   and over whom a spirit of straying rules.

If he is wicked, he shall become a sign for ever,
and a wonder to every generation,
and an object of horror to all flesh.

By Thy goodness alone is man righteous,
and with Thy many mercies Thou strengthenest him.
Thou wilt adorn him with Thy splendour,
and wilt cause him to reign amid many delights,
with everlasting peace and length of days.
For Thou hast spoken,
and Thou wilt not take back Thy Word.

And I, Thy servant,
I know by the spirit which Thou hast given to me
that Thy Word is Truth;
And that all Thy works are righteousness,
and that Thou wilt not take back Thy Word.

Thanksgiving Hymns V:10–20 (3), CDSS p.247

Man is inherently prone to sin and to wandering in the material universe. Over him a "spirit of straying rules". He can descend to the depths of iniquity, becoming a "wonder to every generation and an object of horror to all flesh". "By Thy goodness alone" is man able to follow the path to purity by means of "Thy Word". In another psalm, the same writer reiterates that for a soul to turn towards God is in God's "hand", not man's:

I know through the understanding which comes from Thee
that righteousness (spirituality) is not in a hand of flesh,
that man is not master of his way,
and that it is not in mortals to direct their step.
I know that the inclination of every spirit
is in Thy hand;
Thou didst establish all its ways before ever creating it,
and how can any man change Thy words?

Thanksgiving Hymns VII:10–15 (5), CDSS p.250

In another of these hymns, the writer makes it evident that this change of inner direction comes about through mystic contact with the Word:

How shall I look,
unless Thou open my eyes?
Or hear,
unless Thou unstop my ears?

My heart is astounded,
for to the uncircumcised ear
a Word has been disclosed;
And a heart of stone
has understood the right precepts.

I know it is for Thyself
that Thou hast done these things, O God;
For what is flesh
that Thou shouldst act marvellously towards it? …

And I, a creature of clay
kneaded with water,
a heap of dust
and a heart of stone –
For what am I reckoned to be worthy of this?

For into an ear of dust Thou hast put a new Word,
and hast engraved on a heart of stone, things everlasting.
Thou hast caused the straying spirit to return
that it may enter into a Covenant with Thee;
And stand before Thee for ever
in the everlasting abode;
Illumined with perfect light for ever,
with no more darkness,
for unending seasons of joy
and unnumbered ages of peace.

Thanksgiving Hymns XXI:15–30 (24), CDSS pp.293–94

In another hymn, God is praised for His Word – here called Wisdom – which has "unstopped my ears to marvellous mysteries". Yet – once again – the writer insists that he is only a weak and sinful human being, "a shape of clay, kneaded in water":

These things I know
by the Wisdom which comes from Thee;
For Thou hast unstopped my ears
to marvellous mysteries.

And yet I, a shape of clay,
kneaded in water,
a ground of shame
and a source of pollution,

> a melting pot of wickedness
> and an edifice of sin,
> a straying and perverted spirit
> of no understanding,
> fearful of righteous judgments,
> what can I say that is not foreknown,
> and what can I utter that is not foretold?
> *Thanksgiving Hymns IX:20–25 (6), CDSS p.254*

In all of these extracts, the devotee or mystic expresses the fact that although a mere human being, he has realized a potential that has originated with God Himself.

See also: **Ādam**, **aḥsan al-taqwīm**, **ashraf al-makhlūqāt**, **image of God**.

manas, **manaḥ** (S), **man** (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* mind; in Indian philosophy, the internal instrument of perception and cognition; more generally, inclination, will, purpose, disposition, mood, temperament, conscience, idea, imagination, desire, mood, intellect, intelligence. Although the two words have essentially the same meaning, the Sanskrit words *manas* and *manaḥ* are generally used in Indian philosophy with a more specific use than *man,* the more common Hindi term. In their widest sense, *man* and *manas* refer to all the mental powers such as intelligence, understanding, perception, conscience and will. In their limited sense, they mean the capacity for reflection, inference, testimony, doubt, cognition, conjecture, memory, desire, and feelings of pleasure and pain. Mysticism deals with the relationship of the *man* or *manas* with the soul, ways of controlling its waywardness and channelling its energy for God-realization.

In Indian philosophy, *man* or *manas* refer to the lower aspects of the mind. It is described as the mental faculty or internal, subtle organ of perception and cognition. It is also one of the four faculties of the *antaḥkaraṇa,* the human mind or the mind focus that energizes and functions through the physical body. *Manas* is mind stuff. It is the energy or substance which registers impressions from the senses *(indriyas).* Its function is to receive sensory input, recognizing and responding automatically to the images thus gathered. Its reactions are instantaneous according to the ingrained habits or grooves derived from previous experience. It automatically likes or dislikes the experiences of life according to its own past impressions and tendencies. The experiences of attraction and aversion are thus an aspect of the functioning of *manas.*

In this context, *man* or *manas* is contrasted with *buddhi,* man's higher discriminating and reasoning intelligence or understanding, often translated as 'intellect'. *Buddhi* is that faculty which distinguishes man from animals, and is present in every human being regardless of whether or not they are of an intellectual bent of mind. *Manas* is therefore the intermediary instrument between the senses and the *buddhi*. The *Kaṭha Upanishad* says:

> Subtler than the senses are the *tattvas;*
> Subtler than the *tattvas* is the mind *(manaḥ);*
> Subtler than the mind is the understanding *(buddhi).*
> Beyond the understanding is the higher Self *(Mahān ātmā);*
> Beyond the *mahat* (cosmic mind) is the Unmanifest;
> Beyond the Unmanifest is the Supreme Being *(Purusha);*
> Beyond the *Purusha* there is nothing:
> that is the end, the supreme Goal.
>
> *Kaṭha Upanishad 1:3.10–11*

Many people in the modern scientific world consider the mind to be no more than the result of electrochemical activity in the brain. Based upon this hypothesis, however, science has been unable to formulate even a generalized theory of how thoughts are formed, how memory functions, how biochemical processes result in a sense of personal identity and consciousness, how brainwave activity relates to mental function – and so on. Although a great deal is now known of brain physiology, the broad understanding of the mind, based on modern scientific principles, has advanced little since the early twentieth century. Hence, 'Ināyat Khān's observation is as true now as when he wrote:

> What is mind? One part of humanity considers mind as something inexplicable, and another part of humanity considers mind as an action of the brain. It is a very limited conception of mind. The voice reaches, through the wireless, for thousands of miles, but the mind is much finer than voice. It cannot be limited and restricted to the brain, although the brain is the medium by which thoughts are made clear.... There is a saying that what you are speaks louder than what you say. This means that the voice of mind reaches further than the spoken word and has greater effect.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK4 p.133*

Mystics say that the mind is the cause of all man's troubles. But, when disciplined, and in search of its own source, it can become a friend and ally. Hence, the *Amṛita Bindu Upanishad* says:

> Truly, mind *(man)* is the cause of man's bondage and liberation.
> The mind *(man)* that is attached to sense objects
> leads to bondage;

> Dissociated from sense objects,
> it leads to liberation.
> So they (the wise) believe.
> *Amṛita Bindu Upanishad 2; cf. MUM p.18*

Using the term in a general sense, mystics say that just as the soul is a drop of the universal Soul – the ocean of Soul or God – so too is the individual mind a drop of the universal mind. It is an agent of the power whose role it is to keep souls away from an understanding of their true home. The function of the mind is to keep souls tied to the realm of birth and death. It does this so well that most individuals are quite unconscious of the state they are in, and have no understanding of the part played by the mind in determining the course of their lives.

See also: **antaḥkaraṇa**, **man** (▸2), **mind**.

mandir (H/Pu), **mandar** (Pu) *Lit.* temple, palace, mansion; a magnificent building; mystically, the human body; often as *Hari mandar* (the temple of the Lord). Many mystics have pointed out that the real temple or holy place in which God is to be worshipped is the human form. The Lord is within, and the place to worship him is also within. Guru Nānak says:

> The ramparted castle *(koṭ gaṛh)* of the body *(kāyā)*
> is called the mansion of the Master (*Hari kā mandar,* temple of God).
> Within it, the mortal finds the rubies and gems
> by uttering the God's Name, through the *Guru*'s grace.
> Implant thou the Lord-Master's Name *(Hari Hari Nām)* in thy body,
> which is the immensely comely palace of God *(Hari kā mandar).*
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 952, MMS*

See also: **Hari mandir**, **temple of God**.

maṇipūrak(a) chakra, **maṇipūr(a) chakra** (S/H) *Lit.* gemlike *(maṇipūraka, maṇipūra)* wheel or centre *(chakra);* the navel *chakra;* the subtle centre of pranic energy associated with the bodily administration of the fiery or *tejas tattva* (elemental state). This *chakra* is so called because, according to the *Gautamīya Tantra,* the fiery *tattva* makes it as lustrous and sparkling as a gem *(maṇi),* when observed by the inner eye of the yogi. Some texts describe this *chakra* as having eight petals or energy aspects, and a bright, light red colour. The *Shiva Saṃhitā* describes it as ten-petalled, with a golden colour:

> The third *chakra,* called *maṇipūra,* is situated near the navel; it is of golden colour, having ten petals designated by the letters *ḍa, ḍha, ṇa, ta, tha, da, dha, na, pa, pha.*
>
> Its presiding adept is called *Rudra,* the giver of all auspicious things, and the presiding goddess of this place is known as the most sacred *Lākinī.*
>
> When the *yogī* contemplates on the *maṇipūra* lotus, he obtains the power known as the *pātālasiddhi* – the giver of constant happiness. He becomes lord of desires, destroys sorrows and diseases, cheats death, and can enter the body of another.
>
> He can make gold and so on, see the adepts (with his inner eye), discover medicines for diseases, and see hidden treasures.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 5:79–82; cf. SSV pp.66–67*

In some texts, the presiding deity at this centre is *Vishṇu,* the preserver and nourisher of life, with his consort or counterpart, *Lākinī.* The pranic current here is known as *samāna.* The *maṇipūraka chakra* is the subtle administrator concerned with the distribution of nourishment throughout the body, governing the body's kitchen and larder. Through its administration, food is digested, stored, retrieved and distributed throughout the body. Carbohydrates, fats and proteins are broken down by the digestive system, used where necessary, and otherwise stored in the liver, fatty tissue and muscles, respectively.

The gland which would seem to be associated with the expression of the fiery *tattva* and with this *chakra* is the pancreas, which (by means of enzyme secretion) oversees the digestive processes, on the one hand, and (through its endocrine functions) the storage and retrieval of food, on the other.

This *chakra* is also called the *nābhi* (navel) *chakra* or *nābhi padma* (navel lotus).

See also: **chakra**, **prāṇa**, **tattva**.

manomaya-kosha (S) *Lit.* sheath or covering *(kosha)* filled with or made up of *(maya)* mind *(manas).* The third of the five *koshas* covering the *ātman* or soul, according to the *Upanishads,* is the *manas,* that aspect of the human mind which handles man's instinctive and perceptive faculties, including the five organs of sensory perception.

See **kosha**.

mānush(a) janm(a) (S/H), **mānukh janam** (H/Pu) *Lit.* human *(mānush)* birth *(janma),* portrayed by mystics as the opportunity for God-realization:

> Of what purpose is the human birth *(mānush janma)*,
> if you do not worship God, O fool?
> Intoxicated by the wine of *māyā* (illusion),
> you wander about.
> Deluded, you remain in the world.
>
> *Dādū, Bānī 2, Shabd 39:1–2, DDB2 p.12*

And:

> Human birth *(mānush janam)* is rare:
> you may not get it again.
> It is like a fruit that ripens,
> and falls to the earth,
> and cannot be put back on the branch again.
>
> *Kabīr, Bījak, Sākhī 115, KSB p.94*

See also: **janma**.

mat(a) (S/H) *Lit.* opinion, notion, belief, conviction, view, creed, religious opinion, teaching, tenets; faith, experience; knowledge which a man acquires with the help of his *buddhi* (reasoning) to shape the course of his conduct. The term appears in such expressions as *Buddha Mata* (Buddhist Teachings), *Jain Mat* (Jain Teachings) and *Sant Mat* (Teachings of the Saints).

maṭkā, **maṭkī** (H/Pu), **maṭukī** (Pu) *Lit.* an earthenware jar or pitcher; a *maṭkā* is a large vessel, a *maṭkī* or *maṭukī* is a small vessel; also, any vessel used for churning milk into butter; metaphorically, something perishable or easily broken; esoterically, the body. Guru Arjun says that the body soon dies; only the soul who goes beyond the realm of *trikuṭī* (the universal mind) finds eternity:

> The bodily earthen vessel *(maṭukī)* shall definitely break:
> He who is rid of three qualities (is released from *trikuṭī*)
> dwells in his own home.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 374, MMS*

Kabīr advises that the body should be taken as a vessel in which the Word can be revealed by suitable churning, like butter is made from milk by churning in a pitcher:

> Make thy body the churning jar *(maṭukī)*,
> and churn therein with thy mind-stick:

> Into this churning jar *(maṭukī),*
> amass the curd of God's Name (*Shabd,* Word).
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 478, MMS*

See also: **sabū**.

mayl (A/P) *Lit.* inclination; sometimes explained as 'addressing oneself' to the spiritual destination, sometimes as the 'tendency' to return to one's origin in God. 'Irāqī says:

> Inclination *(mayl)* is said to be the tendency to return to one's origin without consciousness of the origin or goal, just as the natural tendency of minerals is to revert involuntarily to their constituent elements and of those elements, in turn, to involuntarily return to their origin.
>
> *'Irāqī, Iṣṭilāḥāt, RLI p.53, in FNI2 p.179, in SSE2 p.9*

In other words, the tendency to return to their source is present within all creatures, whether they are conscious of it or not. In human beings, this is the innate longing to return to the Lord:

> Until beyond eternity the inhabitants of both the worlds
> have an inclination *(mayl)* towards You,
> whether or not they know You.
>
> *'Aṭṭār, in FNI2 p.179; cf. in SSE2 p.9*

merchant A person engaged in the purchase and sale of commodities and products, especially internationally, away from their own native home. In early Middle Eastern mysticism, notably Christian, gnostic and Manichaean, it was usually the Masters or Saviours who were called Merchants, travelling far from their own spiritual home to come to this world, purchasing souls with their own spiritual wealth, and taking them home. Christian and Manichaean missionaries have been similarly described.

In a few instances, however, souls in human form have also been likened to merchants who come to this world in search of wealth and goods. They have the option to trade in worthless things or in something of great value. As Jesus said:

> The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man,
> seeking goodly pearls:
> Who, when he had found one pearl of great price,
> went and sold all that he had, and bought it.
>
> *Matthew 13:45–46, KJV*

A spiritual seeker is like a merchant in search of valuable pearls. But when he finds one of a value and quality surpassing all that he has, he relinquishes everything else in his efforts to obtain it. Just so, when the seeker finds that the spiritual pearl can be obtained within himself as long as he lives the right kind of life and is attentive to his spiritual practice, he relinquishes all other desires of the world and devotes all his attention to finding it and making best use of his human form.

This meaning is echoed in an early Christian, Nestorian hymn where the Saviour is the "Bridegroom" or "unblemished pearl" which the wise merchants (souls) acquired:

> The Bridegroom in his chamber is like an unblemished pearl,
> which the chief merchants bought,
> and through which they were enriched and ennobled.
>
> *Nestorian Liturgy; cf. NR2 p.275, MEM p.118, SPZ p.732*

The metaphor also appears in the Manichaean parable of the pearl borer where, once again, the merchant has an interest in "pearls":

> A merchant had many precious pearls (*lit.* gems). In order to have them bored, he hired a man for a hundred pieces of gold per day, and took him to his home. When the workman had sat himself down, his eye fell upon a lute which happened to be there, and he examined it with interest. When the merchant asked him if he knew how to play the lute, he answered, "Yes, very well," for he was really skilled in that art.
>
> The merchant said, "Then pick it up." So the workman picked it up and played beautiful melodies in a fine style for the merchant the whole day long – who left the box with the pearls open – beating time with his hand and swaying his head to it, full of great joy.
>
> In the evening, the workman said to the merchant, "Now give me my wages."
>
> When the merchant responded, "But what have you done to earn wages?", the workman replied, "You hired me, and I did what you told me to do."
>
> The workman insisted, and a quarrel ensued which could not be resolved. So on the following day they went before a judge for a trial. The owner of the pearls spoke thus, "My lord, I hired this man for one day, for a hundred gold dinars, so that he should bore my pearls. He has not bored any pearls, but now demands his wages from me."
>
> The workman, in rebuttal, addressed the judge thus, "My lord, when this gentleman saw me in the bazaar, he asked me, 'Hey, what work can you do?' I replied, 'Sir, whatever work you may order me

> to do, I can do it all.' When he had taken me to his house, he ordered me to play the lute. So – at the owner's bidding – I played the lute until nightfall."
>
> The judge pronounced this verdict, "You hired this man to do work for you, so why did you not order him to bore the pearls? Why did you bid him play on the lute instead? The man's wages will have to be paid in full. If, at another time, there should be any pearls to be bored, give him another hundred gold dinars, and he shall then bore your pearls on another day."
>
> Thus, under constraint, the owner of the pearls paid the hundred gold dinars, his pearls remained unbored, left for another day, and he himself was filled with shame and contrition.
>
> The wise give this allegorical explanation: that man who understood all arts and crafts (the pearl borer) represents the body. The hundred gold dinars represent a lifespan of a hundred years. The owner of the pearls (the merchant) is the soul, and the boring of the pearls represents spirituality and spiritual practice.
>
> *Manichaean Parables; cf. BEB p.19, GSR pp.195:17, MM p.92, ST pp.465–69*[1]

The explanation of the story is provided briefly in the final paragraph. The soul (the merchant) 'hires' the body (the pearl borer) for the span of a hundred years or so. The purpose of this is to acquire spiritual wealth (to bore pearls) by means of spiritual practice. The body, however, and consequently the soul, is distracted by its own multiple talents, faculties and interests, passing its time absorbed in the seemingly delightful and endless play of the senses. Through the body, the soul becomes entranced by the apparently sweet music of transient existence. The soul remains "beating time with his hand and swaying his head to it, full of great joy".

But there is a reckoning. When the time of death ("nightfall") comes, whether or not the body has been employed for its proper purpose, the soul has to pay for the way in which it has used its opportunity of being in the human form.

The "judge" who decrees that payment must be made is the negative power who oversees the administration of all the sins, debts or *karma* of the individual. The boring of the pearls being left for another day indicates that the "merchant" – the soul – will have to take another birth to achieve its spiritual purpose.

See also: **Merchant** (▸2), **pearl**.

1. This Manichaean parable has been reconstructed from the available fragmentary manuscripts.

Meru daṇḍ(a) (S/H) *Lit.* staff *(daṇḍa)* of *Meru;* the spinal cord; the central axis of the human form, associated with the flow and distribution of various energies, physical and subtle, throughout the rest of the body. In Hindu mythology, Mount *Meru* (or *Mer*) is the centre of the universe, just as the spine is the central axis of the body.

See also: **jambu dvīpa** (4.1).

mind The human faculty to which thought, feeling, intelligence, intellect, memory and so on are generally ascribed. Sometimes, the mind – as intellect or reason – is contrasted with feelings or emotions. Considered by some to be an immaterial or subtle part of a human being; asserted by others to be an aspect of brain function and entirely material in nature. The term is used variously in everyday usage.

Mystically, the term has a particular meaning, sometimes referring to the individual or human mind – including all mental and emotional functions – sometimes to the universal mind, and sometimes to any or all aspects of the mind as it is found within the three worlds of the mind: physical, astral and causal. The higher aspects of the mind, lying between the individual mind and the universal mind, are also referred to as the greater mind. Mind can thus refer to aspects of the greater mind, as well as to the human or individual mind. In this context, the universal mind is the highest and most subtle level of mind as it exists at the highest level of the causal region.

In more ancient times, the creative Power of God was also referred to as God's Mind or Intelligence (Gk. *Nous*), as His Thought *(Ennoia)* or as divine Reason (Gk. *Logos*). The Arabic and Persian term *'aql* has been used in the same way, especially as *al-'Aql al-Awwal* (First Mind, Primal Intelligence) and *al-'Aql al-Kullī* (Cosmic Mind, Universal Intelligence). Similarly, the more ancient Zoroastrian term *manō* was used in a similar manner, as in *Vohu Manō* (Primal Mind) or *Vahishta Manō* (Great Mind).

See also: **'aql, antaḥkaraṇa, Logos** (3.1), **man, Nous** (3.1), **regions** (4.1), **universal mind** (6.1), **Vohu Manō** (3.1).

mirror A surface that reflects light without diffusion, producing an image of any object placed before it; in modern times, generally glass coated with a metal film; previously, polished metal; metaphorically, something that reflects or portrays something else. Mystically, the soul has been described as a mirror. When dirty with the accumulation of sin, it appears to be darkness. When pure, it reflects the light of God. In the gnostic allegory, the *Robe of Glory,* the soul reaches a point in its inner ascent where it receives its "garment" or "robe", symbolizing its own true nature of light:

> And suddenly, as I faced it,
>   the garment seemed to me like a mirror of myself.
> I saw in it my whole self,
>   moreover I faced my whole self in facing it.
> For we were two in distinction,
>   and yet again one in one likeness.
> *Robe of Glory 76–78, Acts of Thomas IX; cf. AAA p.243, ANT p.414, HS pp.24–27*

Many writers have used the same metaphor. The second-century Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, writes:

> As a burnished mirror, so ought man to have his soul pure. When there is rust on the mirror, it is not possible that a man's face be seen in the mirror; so also when there is sin in a man, such a man cannot behold God. Do you, therefore, show me your self, whether you are not an adulterer or a fornicator or a thief or a robber or a purloiner; whether you do not corrupt boys; whether you are not insolent or a slanderer or passionate or envious or proud or supercilious; whether you are not a brawler or covetous or disobedient to parents; and whether you do not sell your children. For to those who do these things, God is not manifest, unless they have first cleansed themselves from all impurity.
>
> All these things, then, involve you in darkness. As when a filmy defluxion on the eyes (*i.e.* a cataract) prevents one from beholding the light of the sun, thus also do iniquities, O man, involve you in darkness, so that you cannot see God.
>
> *Theophilus, Letter to Autolycus I:2, WTT p.54*

Indian mystics have said the same. God also dwells within, like fragrance in a flower or like a reflection in a mirror:

> As fragrance abides in the flower
>   and as reflection in the mirror *(mukar):*
> So does God dwell within thee,
>   and search thou Him within thy heart, O brother.
> *Guru Tegh Bahādur, Ādi Granth 684, MMS*

On looking into this mirror, the soul can see God:

> My Master has revealed to me
>   the mirror *(mukar)* within my own body.
> Now, singing and dancing in ecstasy,
>   I have beheld my true Lord.

But none know of this wealth
  that lies within the body.
Mīrābāī, Sudhā Sindhu, Svajīvan kī Pad 32:2–3, MSS p.280; cf. MDL p.31

However, like polished metal mirrors of ancient times, the rust and dirt must be cleansed from the surface of the mirror before the Divine can be reflected in it:

Moment by moment gather your soul,
  and hold it at the eye centre.
Cleanse the mirror *(darpaṇ)* of your mind,
  and catch the divine Melody with your soul;
If your longing is keen, you will pierce the veil,
  and reach the quintessence.
Then indeed, O Tulsī, will you behold
  the radiant dust of the lotus feet of your Master.
Tulsī Sāhib, Shabdāvalī 1, Kakahrā 7, TSH1 p.25

If you long to see the Lord within,
  scour the mirror *(darpaṇ)*, and keep it clean;
If the mirror is covered with dirt,
  you can never even glimpse the Lord.
Kabīr, Granthāvalī, Pad 262, KG p.132

Fine powder, such as ash, was used to polish metal mirrors. For the soul, this "ash" is the divine Word *(Shabd)*:

Cleanse your mirror *(darpaṇ)* with the ash of *Shabd.*
Tulsī Sāhib, Shabdāvalī 1, Kuṇḍalī 19:3, TSH1 p.39

For this cleansing, it is best to enlist the help of an "adept grinder":

Submit yourself to the Master – the adept grinder –
  let him burnish your mind;
He will remove all the layers of rust:
  like a mirror *(darpaṇ)*, it will shine.
Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Guru 24, KSS p.3

miṣbāḥ (A/P) *Lit.* lamp; a metaphor for the soul within the body, appearing in the *Qur'ān:*

The similitude of His Light
  is as a niche wherein is a lamp *(miṣbāḥ).*

The lamp is in a glass;
The glass, as it were, a shining star.
(This lamp is) kindled from a blessed tree,
  an olive neither of the East nor of the West,
  whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself),
  though no fire touched it.
Light upon light, *Allāh* guideth unto His Light whom He will.
And *Allāh* speaketh to mankind in allegories,
  for *Allāh* is Knower of all things.

Qur'ān 24:35, MGK

This short parable has received various interpretations; al-Ghazālī wrote an entire book *(Mishkāt al-Anwār, Niche for Lights)* on this parable alone. Commonly, the "lamp *(miṣbāḥ)*" is taken as the spiritual part of man, while the "niche", the "glass", the "blessed tree" and its light have been variously interpreted.

See also: **al-Nūr** (2.1).

mūl(a) chakra (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* root *(mūla)* wheel or centre *(chakra). Mūla* means root, basis, origin, source, beginning, bottom, foundation, lower part and so on.

See **mūlādhāra chakra**.

mūlādhār(a) chakra (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* basal *(mūla)* support *(ādhāra)* wheel or centre *(chakra);* the lowest of the six subtle centres in the human body, situated in the region of the perineum; also called the *Gaṇesha chakra, gudā chakra, ādhāra chakra, ādhāra padma, mūla chakra, mūla kanwal* and so on.

The *chakras* are subtle centres of administration for the pranic energy or life force which energizes the physical body from within. Each *chakra* is associated with the administration of a particular *tattva* or elemental state of matter, the *tattva* at the *mūlādhāra chakra* being that of earth or *prithvī.* In the gross physical body, excretion and elimination, as well as flesh, skin, hair and the solid aspects of body tissues are a part of the outer manifestation of the *prithvī tattva* and its associated *prāṇa* (subtle life energy). The adrenal glands also appear to be an aspect of its outer expression, these being the hormones associated with basic survival on the physical plane. Adrenaline (epinephrine), for example, is often dubbed the 'fight or flight' hormone.

The presiding deity or focus of consciousness and administration here is known in Hindu terminology as *Gaṇesh,* symbolized in Hinduism as a god with an elephant's head. It is said that yogis who concentrate their attention at this centre for the purpose of acquiring miraculous powers repeat the *mantra 'kaling'* many millions of times.

The *mūlādhāra chakra* has four 'petals' or energy aspects, being a reflection of the *antaḥkaraṇa* (the subtle 'organ' of human thought) which lies at the base of the *aṇḍa* set of centres, which in its turn is a reflection of the four-petalled centre at the top of *trikuṭī* (*lit.* three peaks, universal mind). Its colour is also reddish, like that of *trikuṭī.*

The *kuṇḍalinī* energy, portrayed metaphorically as a sleeping serpent goddess, is said to lie coiled up at this centre, symbolic of energy lying in concentrated potential form. The *kuṇḍalinī* is the pranic current which energizes the physical form through the six *chakras* of *piṇḍa* (physical universe), but of which the individual is usually unaware. It is through the awakening of consciousness to this force that its potential is released and realized, and miraculous powers attained.

Being the residence of the *kuṇḍalinī,* much is made of this centre in yogic texts. By awakening and moving the *kuṇḍalinī,* which 'guards' the entrance to the *sushumṇā,* the *prāṇa* can be induced to enter this central *nāḍī* (duct) and rise up the spine, ultimately to the *ājñā chakra* and the *chidākāsha* (the 'sky' of the body). This is the goal of *haṭha yoga* in association with *prāṇāyāma.* Yogic and tantric texts associate *kuṇḍalinī* practice with the development of miraculous powers, the fulfilment of desires, the elimination of sins and so on – usually within a short span of time.

See also: **chakra**, **kuṇḍalinī**, **prithvī**, **sushumṇā** (4.1), **tattva**.

mutaṣarrifah (A/P) *Lit.* alternator, occupier; one of the inner faculties of mind *(ḥawāss al-bāṭin).* It is the power of will, the faculty that uses what all the other faculties of mind process and bring forward. The 'common sense' *(ḥiss al-mushtarak)* integrates the data from the senses; the *khayāl* forms images and thoughts based on that data; the *wahm* understands and forms opinions; the *ḥāfiẓah* stores it all in memory; and the *mutaṣarrifah* determines the understanding and acts on it.

See also: **ḥawāss al-bāṭin**.

nābhi chakra, **nābhi padma** (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* navel *(nābhi)* wheel *(chakra)* or lotus *(padma).*

See **maṇipūraka chakra**.

nāḍī (S), **nāṛī** (H/Pu) *Lit.* tube, duct, river, stream; hence, in the body, a nerve or blood vessel; esoterically, a subtle channel for the flow of pranic currents; also, the *nāḍī* is sometimes used as an alternative name for the *kuṇḍalinī*, referring to the central current of pranic energy which runs within the spine. The *nāḍīs* are currents of *prāṇa* (subtle life energy) in the body, radiating out from the *chakras*. According to the *Prashna Upanishad*, there are 101 main *nāḍīs;* for each of these, there are 100 branches; and each of these has 72,000 subsidiaries. This makes a total of 727,210,201 *nāḍīs* – though this may only be a way of saying that there are a great many:

> This self (*i.e.* the subtle body) dwells in the heart. (Radiating from) here, there are one hundred and one *nāḍīs*. Each of these has one hundred branches, and for each branch, there are seventy-two thousand subsidiary *nāḍīs*. In these, moves *vyāna* (the *prāṇa* of the air *tattva*).
>
> *Prashna Upanishad 3:6*

The three central, spinal *nāḍīs* linking and forming the six physical *chakras* are: *iḍā, pingalā* and *sushumṇā*. These are aspects of the three *guṇas* – *tamas, rajas* and *sattva* – at the subtle physical level. The *Shiva Saṃhitā*, speaking of only 350,000 *nāḍīs*, provides more detail:

> There are 350,000 *nāḍīs* in the human body. Of these, there are fourteen principal ones: *sushumṇā, iḍā, pingalā, gāndhārī, hastijihvikā, kuhū, Sarasvatī, pūshā, shankhinī, payasvinī, vāruṇī, alambushā, vishvoda* and *yashasvinī*. Of these, *iḍā, pingalā* and *sushumṇā* are the main ones. Of these three, *sushumṇā* alone is the highest and most beloved of the *yogīs*. The other *nāḍīs* are subordinate to it in the body. These (three) principal *nāḍīs* have their mouths downwards, and are like thin threads of lotus. They are all supported by the vertebral column, and are symbolized by the sun *(pingalā)*, moon *(iḍā)* and fire *(sushumṇā)*....
>
> The *nāḍī* called *iḍā* is on the left side; coiling round the *sushumṇā*, it goes to the right nostril. The *nāḍī* called *pingalā* is on the right side; coiling round the central vessel, it enters the left nostril. The *nāḍī* which is between *iḍā* and *pingalā* is verily *sushumṇā*. It has six stages, six forces, six lotuses, known to the *yogīs*....
>
> The other *nāḍīs* rising from the *mūlādhāra (chakra)* go to the various parts of the body, *e.g.* the tongue, the eyes, the ears, the abdomen, the armpit, the fingers of the hands, the (sex) organ, the scrotum, the anus, the feet and the toes. Having risen from their origin, they stop at their respective destinations, as described above. From these (fourteen) *nāḍīs*, there arise gradually other branches and subbranches, so that at last they become 350,000 in number, and supply their respec-

> tive places. These *nāḍīs* are spread crosswise and lengthwise throughout the body; they are the vehicles of sensation and keep watch over the movements of the *prāṇa* (*i.e.* they also regulate motor functions).
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 2:13–17, 25–27, 29–31; cf. SSV pp.17–20*

See also: **chakra**, **kuṇḍalinī**, **prāṇa**, **tattva**.

nafs (A/P) *Lit.* essence, source, reality; the soul, the self, the mind; Hujwīrī says that etymologically, *nafs* is simply the essence and reality of anything;[1] related to the Hebrew word, *nefesh,* meaning breath, breath of life, soul, spirit, mind, person, will, desire.

Nafs appears with a variety of qualifiers with meanings ranging from the highest level of the spirit to the soul as it appears in the vegetable kingdom. Terms include *nafs al-ūlá* (first soul), *nafs al-kullīyah* (cosmic soul) and *nafs al-nāṭiqah* (spiritual soul), as well as *nafs al-ḥayawānīyah* (animal soul) and *nafs al-nabātīyah* (vegetal soul).

In Sufi writings, when unqualified, *nafs* usually denotes that within man which is the source of all the lower impulses, causing both sins *(ma'āṣī)* and base qualities *(akhlāq danīyah),* such as pride, envy, avarice, anger and lust. Translations of *nafs* into English from Sufi writings include: self, ego, mind, lower soul/self/mind, carnal soul/self/mind, fleshly soul/self/mind, and appetitive soul/self/mind. The *nafs,* then, might seem simply to refer to those lower tendencies which obstruct progress of the disciple on the mystic path. However, Hujwīrī says that the "*nafs* is a real substance" or energy:

> The lower soul *(nafs)* is a real substance *('aynī),* not a mere attribute, and … has attributes which we clearly perceive. The Apostle said: "Thy worst enemy is thy lower soul *(nafs),* which is between thy two sides." When you have obtained knowledge of it, you recognize that it can be mastered by discipline, but that its essence and substance do not perish.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV:6, KM p.206*

The term seems to correspond more or less to the Greek *psychē,* the Latin *anima,* and is similar in meaning to the Sanskrit or Hindi *man.*

Throughout Sufi writings, the *nafs* is depicted as the main enemy of spiritual progress. The fundamental *jihād* (battle, struggle) of the spiritual seeker is to overcome the downward pull of the *nafs* so that the spirit can enjoy contemplation of and union with the Divine. Thus, the *mujāhadat al-nafs* (struggle against the lower self) is called *al-jihād al-akbar* (the greater holy war), and an oft-repeated saying in Sufi writings is, "*Mujāhadah* (striving or struggling) leads to *mushāhadah* (contemplation or vision)."

As the *nafs* is the fundamental and first enemy of spiritual progress, Sufis have taken some care to describe its nature. Rūmī says the *nafs* is like a thief who has stolen something from a blind man – and what he has stolen is the man's capacity for vision:

> When a thief steals some article of property from a blind man,
> the blind man laments blindly.
> Until the thief says to him,
> "It is I that stole from you, for I am an artful thief,"
> how should the blind man know his thief,
> since he has not the eye's light and that radiance of vision?
> When he (the thief) confesses,
> at once take tight hold of him,
> that he may tell the marks of the goods.
>
> The greater holy war *(jihād-i akbar),* then,
> consists in squeezing the thief to the dregs,
> in order that he may tell what he has stolen
> and what he has carried off.
> First, he has stolen your eye salve:
> When you take it back,
> you will regain your insight.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:2375–80; cf. MJR2 p.344*

The words translated here as "squeezing the thief" imply putting a criminal 'in the stocks'. The greater *jihād,* the *mujāhadat al-nafs,* is sometimes seen as torturing and tormenting the *nafs* through severe discipline and asceticism. Yet Rūmī depicts here the helplessness of the spiritually blind in dealing with the *nafs.*

The *nafs* is often compared to a *ghūl* (ghoul), a demon that can assume any shape. The spiritual path is likened to a journey, the spiritual seeker to a traveller, and the ghoul-like *nafs* lurks beside the pathway taking whatever shape will entice the seeker to venture off the path into the wilderness and to his destruction. Rūmī observes that among the shapes it can take is piety and outward shows of religion:

> Some Companions (of Muḥammad) begged the Prophet
> to tell them of the deceitfulness of the ghoul-like *nafs,*
> saying, "What hidden selfish interests
> does it mingle in acts of worship
> and in pure spiritual devotion?"
>
> They were not seeking from him excellence of piety;
> They were not inquiring where lay the outward defect.

Hair by hair, speck by speck,
  they were recognizing the deceitfulness of the *nafs.*
Rūmī, Maśnavī I:366–69; cf. MJR2 p.23

The origin of the *nafs,* or the reason why human beings should be so tormented is difficult to understand. Judaism, Christianity and Islam share a common belief in a devil who is the source of all negativity. Rūmī says that the *nafs* is of the same essence as this devil:

Both the *nafs* and the devil
  have ever been one person essentially;
They have manifested themselves in two forms.
Rūmī, Maśnavī III:4053; cf. MJR4 p.227

Whatever the devil may or may not be, Sufis have warned that the power of the *nafs* should not be underestimated. Rūmī actually describes the *nafs* as hell itself:

To slay this enemy is not the work
  of wisdom *('aql)* and intelligence:
The inward lion is not subdued by the hare.
This *nafs* is hell, and hell is a fiery dragon,
  which is not diminished by oceans of water....
Inasmuch as this *nafs* of ours is a part of hell,
  and all parts have the nature of the whole,
  to God alone belongs this power to kill it.
Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1374–75, 1382–83; cf. MJR2 p.76

Again equating the *nafs* with hell, Rūmī says:

To regard the *nafs* as easy to subdue is folly, folly.
O son, if you seek to know the form of the *nafs,*
  read the story of hell with its seven gates.
Rūmī, Maśnavī I:778–79, MJR2 p.44

The negative passions, such as malice, are a part of hell and bear the one who indulges in them towards their origin. The seeker, he says, must "take care":

The origin of malice is hell *(dūzakh),*
  and your malice is a part of that whole,
  and is the enemy of your religion.
Since you are a part of hell *(dūzakh),* take care:
  the part gravitates toward its whole!
Rūmī, Maśnavī II:274–75, MJR2 p.236

That which comes out of the *nafs* is likened to fire. The *nafs* and the *hawā'* (sensual desires) taken together are likened to steel and flint; from the two striking together come the sparks and flames of iniquity. The sparks and flames may be extinguished with water, but for as long as the steel and flint are still being struck together, more and more flames will come.

Sufis depicted a pre-eternity before the creation when the *nafs* was the beloved spouse of the spirit; the *nafs* became an enemy when it was seduced by *hawā'*. Thus, the battle to transform the *nafs* from an enemy to a friend is a major theme in Sufi writings.

Who is battling with the *nafs?* In Sufi terms, the inward composition of man is three-part. The spirit (A. *rūḥ,* P. *jān*) corresponds more or less to the Greek *pneuma,* the Latin *spiritus* and the Sanskrit and Hindi *ātman.* The *'aql,* generally translated as intellect, intelligence or reason, is the higher mind in contrast to the *nafs,* which is the lower, human and individual mind. Rūmī says that just as the *nafs* is one in essence with the devil, the *'aql* is one in essence with the angels.[2] The pull of the *'aql* is inward and upward; the pull of the *nafs* is downward and outward.

In Sufi writings, the image of a man riding on an ass, or a huntsman riding a horse, is frequently used to illustrate the proper relationship between the *'aql* and the *nafs.* The *nafs,* the beast, must be trained and controlled by the *'aql,* the intelligent rider. However, as Rūmī says, the *'aql* is like a hare, and the *nafs* like a lion; the *nafs* is a power so great that none but God has the power to control it. The *'aql* cannot control the *nafs* until the spirit *(rūḥ* or *jān)* has control over the *'aql,* just as the vizier cannot direct and control the citizens without the authority of the king to support him.

Sufis have said that the *nafs* should be controlled, subdued or even killed. Referring to the *nafs* by the common image of an ass *(khar),* Rūmī says that Jesus, as a Saint, was able to subdue the *nafs,* and thereby to purify and transform its nature:

> The ass *(khar)* of Jesus took on
>   the temperament of the spirit:
> It took its abode in the place of the intelligent,
>   because (in Jesus) intelligence *('aql)* was ruling,
>   and the ass *(khar)* was weak –
> The ass *(khar)* is made lean by a strong rider.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:1858–59; cf. MJR2 p.317*

Elsewhere, he simply suggests the destruction of the *nafs,* here symbolized as a "cow":

> To kill the cow (the *nafs*) is the stipulation
>   imposed by the path,

in order that the spirit may be restored
to consciousness by the stroke of her tail.
Kill most quickly the cow, your *nafs,*
so that the hidden spirit may become alive and conscious.

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:1445–46; cf. MJR2 p.295

Rūmī is depicting the *nafs* as a cow that, while dying, swings its tail and hits the spirit, waking it up. Destroying or controlling the *nafs* are both ways of saying the same thing.

The Sufis described the process of training the *nafs* as a transformation from the commanding *nafs (nafs al-ammārah)* to the (self-)reproachful *nafs (al-nafs al-lawwāmah),* and finally to the *nafs* at peace *(al-nafs al-muṭma'innah).* The commanding *nafs* describes the condition of the ordinary person, whose *nafs* holds the reins of control, overpowering the higher mind and the soul. The (self-)reproachful *nafs* takes guidance from the higher mind's faculty of discrimination, conscience and wisdom, reproaching itself for lapses. "I swear by the reproachful soul," says Muḥammad in the *Qur'ān*[3] – meaning, "I swear on my conscience" – that what I say is the truth. The *nafs* at peace has reached tranquillity, and is fit to enter paradise:

O soul at peace *(al-nafs al-muṭma'innah),*
return unto thy Lord,
well pleased (thyself), well pleasing (unto Him)!
Enter thou among my servants!
Enter thou my paradise!

Qur'ān 89:27–30, KI

Some Sufis further analysed the process of transforming the *nafs* into five, six or seven stages. The various categorizations of these stages do not agree with one another, but all listings of the stages in the development of the *nafs* include the three basic stages described above. Other stages appearing in various listings include:

Al-nafs al-mulhamah	The inspired *nafs.*
Al-nafs al-rāḍīyah	The satisfied *nafs.*
Al-nafs al-qiddīsah	The sanctified *nafs.*
Al-nafs al-'ālimah	The wise *nafs.*
Al-nafs al-sālīmah	The perfect *nafs.*

In many of the longer lists of the stages of *nafs,* the highest ones are regarded as describing the condition of the prophets and Saints, the highest possible spiritual development. In these usages, the definition of *nafs* as 'lower mind' no longer makes sense. The usage shifts back to the etymological roots of *nafs,* meaning self, soul or *psychē.*

See also: **al-nafs al-ammārah**, **man**, **mind**, **nefesh**.

1. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XIV:6, *KM* p.196.
2. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* III:4053–54, *MJR4* p.227.
3. *Qur'ān* 75:2, *KI*.

nafs al-ammārah, al- (A), **nafs-i ammārah** (P) *Lit.* the soul, mind or self *(nafs)* that incites or commands *(ammārah);* the egoistic and passionate soul; derived from the *Qur'ān* where it says that the *nafs* "incites to evil *(ammāratun bi al-sū')*".[1] The expression *al-nafs al-ammārah* implies the mind that inspires evil, the inner being of man in its lowest and darkest condition, when the mind is utterly under the sway of sensual desires *(hawā')*. Sufis list various stages in the purification of the *nafs*, describing three, six or seven stages but, in every case, the term *al-nafs al-ammārah* is the lowest.

It is *al-nafs al-ammārah* that is in command of every person who has not developed spiritually. This *nafs* is guided by the simple principle of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. It commands man's actions, ignores the promptings of the higher mind *('aql)* and the longings of the spirit *(jān* or *rūḥ)* for union with its divine Source.

'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī explains that so long as a person is fettered by *nafs-i ammārah*, he cannot understand the divine mysteries; he can only listen to discourses or read about mysticism. Once the *nafs* submits, then it "takes on the heart's hue", and begins to understand through direct spiritual experience:

> Ah! You are still fettered by the passions of your lower soul *(nafs-i ammārah)*, and so cannot hear the recital of these mysteries except through the ear of discursive reason *(gūsh-i qāl)*. Wait till your soul converts, ... and takes on the heart's hue: then your heart will communicate to you in the language of direct intuition *(ḥāl)* all that it could not tell you in the tongue of discourse *(qāl)*.
>
> *'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, TQH pp.196–97, in HSC p.301*

See also: **nafs**.

1. *Qur'ān* 12:53.

nafs al-ḥayawānīyah, al- (A), **nafs-i ḥayavānī** (P) *Lit.* the animal *(ḥayawānīyah)* soul, self or mind *(nafs);* the soul as it manifests in animal life; the animal *nafs;* the soul or vital force that animates animals, also dealing with animal functions, even in human beings; the third of the four perceptible stages *(al-marātib al-maḥsūsah)* in the evolution of the soul, these being the mineral, vegetable, animal and human stages; also called *rūḥ al-nabātīyah, rūḥ* meaning spirit. Sufis teach that even human beings have to pass through these stages in the course of their spiritual evolution.

See also: **al-marātib al-maḥsūsah** (6.3), **al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī**.

nafs al-nabātīyah, al- (A), **nafs-i nabātī** (P) *Lit.* the mind or soul *(nafs)* of vegetable-ness *(nabātīyah);* the vegetal *nafs;* the soul or vital force that animates vegetable life; the second of the four perceptible stages *(al-marātib al-maḥsūsah)* in the evolution of the soul, these being the mineral, vegetable, animal and human stages; also called the *rūḥ al-nabātīyah, rūḥ* meaning spirit.

See also: **al-marātib al-maḥsūsah** (6.3), **al-rūḥ al-nabātīyah**.

nafs al-nāṭiqah, al- (A), **nafs-i nāṭiqah** (P) *Lit.* the speaking or rational *(nāṭiqah)* soul or mind *(nafs);* the human or individual soul whose inner essence is the divine Spirit; the spiritual or divine soul; also called *al-rūḥ al-nāṭiqah.*

Nāṭiqah is the adjectival form of *nuṭq* (speech), which is used mystically for the Speech or Word of God. Terms such as *nāṭiqah* (speaking, possessing speech, rational) and *logos* (word, reason) have both mundane and spiritual meanings. But in a spiritual context, words such as 'speaking', 'rational' and 'reason' do not convey the right sense. Expressions such as 'spiritual soul' and 'divine soul', though not literal translations, are better.

Rūmī refers to *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah* as a "parrot" whose source of "inspiration" is the Divine:

> The parrot whose voice comes from (Divine) inspiration,
> and whose beginning was before the beginning of existence –
> That parrot is hidden within you.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1717–18; cf. MJR2 p.94*

See also: **al-rūḥ al-nāṭiqah**.

nafs al-wāḥidah, al- (A), **nafs-i vāḥid** (P) *Lit.* the single *(wāḥidah)* spirit *(nafs);* the single person, the single man; used for Adam in the *Qur'ān:*

> O mankind! Fear your guardian Lord,
> who created you from a single person *(al-nafs al-wāḥidah)* –

> Created, out of it, his mate,
> and from them twain scattered (like seeds)
> countless men and women.
>
> *Qur'ān 4:1, HQSA*

In some contexts, *al-Nafs al-Wāḥidah* also refers to God as the Single Spirit or Single Essence.

nāgin (H) *Lit.* a female serpent; a name given to the *kuṇḍalinī,* the serpent power, the energy described as lying coiled like a serpent at the base of the six physical centres or *chakras,* symbolizing energy in potential, ready to spring or rise up.

See also: **kuṇḍalinī**.

nāl (H) *Lit.* tube, path, passage, canal, drain; esoterically, a gateway or valve on the inner journey, as in *bank nāl,* a narrow passageway leading from *sahans dal kanwal* (thousand-petalled lotus) to *trikuṭī* (*lit.* three peaks, universal mind). The term is meant metaphorically, for a place that requires a gathering together of energy and concentration in order for the soul and mind to pass through.

See also: **bank nāl** (4.1).

nār (A) *Lit.* fire; one of the essential elements comprising physical forms, according to Islamic philosophy. In this respect, Islamic thought followed the ancient Greeks.

See also: **arba' 'anāṣir**, **bād** (3.1), **agni**.

nar(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* man, human beings, mankind, people; as in expressions like *nar deh* (human body) and *nar nārāyaṇī deh* (divine human body).

See also: **nar deh**.

nar(a) deh(a), nar(a) rūp(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* body *(deh)* or form *(rūp)* of man *(nar);* the human form; the physical body; the human form of existence, described by mystics as the only form suitably equipped for a soul to begin the journey back to God because of its unique constitution as a complete microcosm of the entire creation.

Mystics say that everything in creation has a purpose. Every thing and every soul, in whatever realm, has its own particular part to play. The purpose of the human form is God-realization. Apart from this potential and the higher intelligence associated with it, man lives his life much like other species. Only his potential for God-realization and spiritual enlightenment distinguishes him. The human manifestation of this potential is seen in his higher intelligence but, generally, this is used for material ends:

> At last you have received the human body *(nar deh):*
> now do something for yourself.
> Do not get entangled in this world:
> it is only a dream in the night, no more.
> Your body *(deh)* and your home are both false:
> why wander in illusion?
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:13.1–3, SBP p.121*

See also: **kāyā**, **man**, **nar nārāyaṇī deh**, **tan**.

nāṛī (H/Pu) See **nāḍī**.

nar nārāyaṇī deh (H/Pu) *Lit.* divine *(nārāyaṇī)* human *(nar)* body *(deh);* so-called because it is only in the human form that the quest for union with God can be started.

See also: **nar deh**.

nature, **nature of light** The individual soul; used especially by Mānī and the later Manichaeans. Being a particle of the supreme light of God, the soul has the same nature as the Divine. In the manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan, for example, the devotee entreats the

> compassionate Father of all the natures of light,
> merciful Mother of all the robbed!
> *Manichaean Hymns, LSMH p.176:13*

And speaking of the Saint or Master, the writer says:

> He comforts and heals all those who uphold filial piety,
> and reanimates all natures of light.
> *Manichaean Hymns, LSMH p.177:18*

Again, begging "Jesus *Buddha*" to save him from the wheel of birth and death, he prays:

> Pray give me the fragrant Water of emancipation, …
> cleanse my wonderful nature (soul) from dust and dirt….
> Send down the springtide of the great Law
> to prosper the ground of my nature:
> And cause the flowers and fruits
> of the tree of my nature to thrive….
> Compel the sun of the great Law to shine universally,
> and make my heart (mind) and nature (soul)
> always bright and pure.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, LSMH p.178:30–32*

nau dwār (H), **nau darvājā**, **nau dar** (Pu), **nava-dvāra** (S) *Lit.* nine *(nau)* doors or gates *(dwār);* the nine outlets of the physical body, *viz.* the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth and the lower two apertures. Indian mystics have commonly spoken of the body as a house with nine doors opening outward, these being the avenues through which the attention flows into the physical world. They also say that there is a hidden or secret door which opens inward, lying behind and between the two eyes, and known as the tenth door, the eye centre, the third eye and by many other such names.

The nine doors lie below the level of the eyebrows. Above this, there are no outward openings. The tenth door lies above the eyes, and opens inwards and upwards. The term was in common usage in ancient times. The *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad,* for instance, speaks of the embodiment of the individual soul "in the city of nine gates":

> The supreme Self *(Haṃsa),* the ruler of the entire universe,
> of all that moves and moves not,
> moves outward, becoming embodied
> in the city of nine gates.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 3:18*

The *Bhagavad Gītā* also refers to the embodied soul dwelling "in the city of nine gates":

> An embodied soul who has controlled his senses,
> having renounced all actions with a discriminating mind,
> resides contentedly in the city of nine gates *(nava-dvāra-pura).*
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 5:13*

The *Kaṭha Upanishad,* however, adds two more to this nine and speaks of the "city with eleven gates":

> The unborn one of undimmed consciousness (*i.e.* the soul)
> dwells in the city *(pura)* of eleven gates.
> Meditating on it (the soul), one is freed from sorrow,
> freed from bondage, and attains liberation.
>
> *Kaṭha Upanishad 2:2.1*

The first addition is generally understood to be the *chakra* situated on a level with the navel. The second is the *Brahmarandhra,* the centre at the upper end of the *sushumṇā nāḍī,* which is variously located by different texts either on the crown of the head or at the root of the palate. The door at the navel *chakra* is a gateway through which some souls leave the body and move around in the physical world in a subtle body, in a process known in modern times as astral projection. The *Kaṭha Upanishad* also adds:

> The self-existent Lord
> has set the doors (of the body) facing outward.
> Therefore, a man perceives only outer things,
> and not the self within.
> But a wise man, seeking immortality,
> turns his eyes (attention) within,
> and sees the inner self.
>
> *Kaṭha Upanishad 2:1.1*

Indian Saints have commonly spoken of ten doors, the tenth door being the eye centre, the *ājñā chakra,* behind and between the two eyebrows. It is through this centre that the soul passes on leaving the body, either during meditation or at death. It is possible that one of the two additional doors referred to in the *Kaṭha Upanishad* is this eye centre, also known in Indian sacred literature as *Shivanetra* (eye of *Shiva*). This is also the centre implied in the *Bhagavad Gītā,* when the devotee is advised to focus his attention "between the eyebrows *(bhrūvor madhye)*".[1]

Many other mystics have spoken of the "nine doors" of the body:

> He who closes his nine doors *(nau dar),*
> and restrains his wandering mind,
> obtains an abode in the Lord's own tenth home.
> There the unstruck Music *(anhad Shabd)* plays day and night.
> Through the *Guru*'s instruction,
> this celestial Strain (*Shabd,* Word) is heard.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 124, MMS*

> I offer body *(tan)*, mind *(man)* and inner mind *(nij man)*:
> I also sacrifice the nine treasures of this world.
> I fix my attention above the nine doors *(nau dwār)*:
> attuned within, I sing praises.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 34:5.5–6, SBP p.284*

See also: **city of nine gates**.

1. *Bhagavad Gītā* 8:9.

ñe'eng (G) *Lit.* word *(ñe'e)* soul *(ang)*; man's divine soul or 'vital word' in the terminology of the South American Guaraní. According to Miguel Alberto Bartolomé, *ñe'eng* is used by the Avá-Chiripá, the Apapokuvá, and most Mbyá subgroups to mean 'divine human soul', 'human voice' or the 'vital word'. A combination of *ñe'e*, meaning language or word, and *ang*, meaning 'soul of divine origin', *ñe'eng* is a word rich in spiritual meaning. By *ñe'eng*, the Guaraní express that God's spirit dwells within man, and that by that indwelling spirit man can know God and ultimately return to Him.

According to the *Ayvu Rapytá (Origin of the Word)*, an early mythological song of the Mbyá Guaraní, the first creation of Mbyá the Creator, was the *ñe'eng*. The *Ayvu Rapytá* records that the *ñe'eng* is the divine part of the soul sent by the true Father of the vital Word (the *Ñé'eng Rú Eté*) to be incarnated in a human form.

The Creator's Spirit is expressed as language, word or voice. In equating language or word or voice with man's divine soul, the Guaraní exhibit a central theme of the world's major mystical traditions: God dwells within man as Sound. The *ñe'eng* is the spiritual part of human beings that guides them to live a pure life. Their association of speech or sound with soul reveals an understanding of the sacred Sound that reverberates through all living beings, sustaining the universe.

The Avá-Chiripá believe the *ñe'eng* guides man to live a spiritually oriented life:

> The *ñe'eng*, as man's divine soul, guides him in carrying out the acts sanctified by mystical rules, like the practice of vegetarianism, meditation and spiritual tranquillity.
>
> *Miguel Bartolomé, Shamanism Among the Avá-Chiripá, SAC p.112*

Maybe, at some time in the history of the Mbyá and Chiripá, and perhaps other Guaraní subgroups, there existed a highly advanced spiritual teacher. This great shaman of the past, whose teachings are reflected in the *Ayvu Rapytá*, taught that the 'vital Word' or divine Power of God existed within every person. Disciples of such a shaman would have practised a mystical inner path of realizing God within. The essence of these teachings has persisted: the Chiripá still believe that the *ñe'eng* guides man towards a spiritual life.

Like many mystical beliefs and teachings, however, Guaraní mystical concepts have devolved into a worldly and materialistic system of ritual. In Chiripá culture, the *ñe'eng* or divine soul has become identified with the person's literal name. As Bartolomé points out, a person's name is his soul's name, so that soul and name form a totality. This unity is expressed in the Chiripá ritual of baptism in which an officiating shaman identifies the names of children.

In the baptism ceremony, called the 'naming of children *(mita-mbo-ery)*', several children receive their names at one time. The 'vital words' or souls must be named, and the deity sending these names must be identified. This is accomplished by special shamans who possess the 'baptismal prayer'.

Bartolomé, who conducted field studies among the Avá-Chiripá in 1968–1969, has described the baptism ritual which bestows on a child his or her name or 'vital word' or soul, there being no distinction between the soul and the name. An officiating shaman uses chants and the sounds of his rattle *(mbaraká)* to invoke spirits to transmit the name. The shaman must decide which deity has sent the new life. The 'vital words' come from the home of the gods or from the country of the dead where dwell the souls of those who are destined to be reincarnated. In a second part of this ceremony, the shaman sprinkles the child with the sap of the sacred cedar tree, a ritual probably derived from Christian influence.

The identification of a person's soul with his name continues in most cases until death. At death, the *ñe'eng* has to pass through a series of ordeals or tests before arriving in paradise or at the home of the deity who sent it into this world. In one of these tests, the *ñe'eng* passes by a place where the owl lives. The owl screeches, calling the souls of other dead, which then try to keep the soul with them. Children's souls pass freely because they have no imperfections *(tekó-achy)* to impede their flight.

Not all *ñe'eng* travel to paradise after death. Some go to the country of the dead *(ñe'eng-güery)* to await reincarnation. The *ñe'eng* are reincarnated when the dead person has desired to come back either because he has died before fulfilling some ambition or has left loved ones. Reincarnation also happens when a person has died violently or has died with no shaman present.

In recent times, the Avá-Chiripá have begun to use two names: the soul name, used only among extended family and in ceremonies; and a forename, bestowed on the child at birth by the parents. This second name, used with strangers, seems to hold little meaning for them – they even change the name frequently.

The baptism ritual suggests that *ñe'eng* has lost an original spiritual meaning and is now taken literally as a personal name, although it is difficult for an outsider to judge what the present-day Chiripá understand to be happening in this ritual. Since some of these people still follow a form of spiritual discipline that includes meditation and vegetarianism, the contemporary culture probably includes both those who hold to an original spiritual meaning of *ñe'eng* and those who associate *ñe'eng* with actual names.

Originally, according to Leon Cadogán, the Guaraní believed in only one soul. At some undetermined time, however, they began believing in a second soul, the animal soul, which develops over a person's life as a result of imperfections *(tekó-achy),* and is responsible for the base passions and evil appetites of men. This animal soul is called *tupichúa* by the Mbyá and *asynguá* by Avá-Chiripá and Apapokuvá.

In an interesting variation on the duality of man's spiritual being, the Ñandeva Guaraní of southern Brazil describe three souls, visualized as shadows. Shadows cast in front of or behind the divine soul are called the *ayvú-kué-poravé* (good word which we speak). The shadow cast to the left is the *atsy-yguá,* the source of man's biological nature and animal behaviour. The shadow cast to the right is the *ayvú-kué* (word which sprouts), which is considered an obedient companion to the *ayvú-kué-poravé.*

The Apyteré Guaraní also think of the soul in three parts: (i) the *ñe'e porá* (good word); (ii) the *ñe'e yoybuy* (word placed crosswise); (iii) the *ñe'e raroba* (word held in waiting). Of divine origin, the first soul flies away in sleep, accompanied by the second soul, which causes evil behaviour. When the two souls return from their journey, they tell the third soul about the revelations they witnessed in the dream, and the individual then remembers or becomes aware of the dream.

Even the tripartite conceptualizations of the human soul support a dual view of man's nature, since the third soul is seen as an adjunct to the divine soul. As Bartolomé points out, for all the individual variations among the Guaraní, their ideas about the soul agree on two points, the duality of man's nature and the identification of the soul with the spoken word.

Multiple souls are not an uncommon belief among the various tribal groups of South America. A lower, animal soul that roams about the forest at night after death is widely reported. Also common is the dream soul that travels in time and space, visiting the future and the past. The Guaraní belief in a divine soul that guides people to live by spiritual rules is relatively rare among native South American tribes.

The *ñe'eng* is termed the *ayvú-kué* (the word which sprouts) by the Apapokuvá, and *ñe'e porá* (good word) by the Apyteré Mbyá.

See also: **asynguá**.

nefesh (He) *Lit.* breath; breath of life, spirit, soul, being; thus, mind, human being, will, desire; one of the three biblical terms for soul or spirit, the other two being *neshamah* (soul, *lit.* breath) and *ruaḥ* (spirit, *lit.* wind). *Nefesh* and *neshamah* are closely related, *nefesh* being derived from *neshef* (to blow), which is related to *neshem* (to breathe), from which *neshamah* is derived. The terms sometimes overlap in their meanings; in the early biblical books they both signify the vital spirit, activating the body and originating in God. However, there are subtle differences between the two terms, especially as their usage evolved over time.

The expression *nefesh ḥayyah* (living soul, living being, living creature) appears several times in the *Genesis* creation story in reference to the creation of both animals and human beings. It indicates the presence of a spiritual essence or life spirit, which activates matter and makes it a living being:

> And God created the great crocodiles, and every living creature *(nefesh ḥayyah)* that moves, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind: and God saw that it was good.
>
> *Genesis 1:21, KB*

Describing the creation of Adam, *Genesis* recounts that only when God breathed the Spirit or Breath of Life *(Nishmat Ḥayyim)* into the nostrils of Adam, did he become a living being or "living soul *(nefesh ḥayyah)*":

> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the Breath of Life *(Nishmat Ḥayyim);* and man became a living soul *(nefesh ḥayyah).*
>
> *Genesis 2:7, KJV*

The term *nefesh* is used throughout the Bible. Some scholars, however, have expressed the opinion that in the early books it carries the connotation of a spiritual life force that permeates the entire being and body of living creatures, but is not necessarily an entity distinct from the body. In later biblical books, however, the Prophets and the *Psalms,* for instance, the writers commonly address their soul directly, seeming to look on it as a unique spiritual entity:

> Bless the Lord, O my soul *(nefesh).*
>
> *Psalm 103:1, KB*

Interestingly, the *Talmud* uses *neshamah* to expound upon this psalm's use of *nefesh,* implying that in the Talmudic period the terms were still equated.

The *Talmud* teaches that the soul's relationship with the individual human being is similar to God's relationship with the world: it is omnipresent, invisible yet all-seeing, all-sustaining, pure and hidden within the body. In this instance, the individual human being is the microcosm and the world is the macrocosm:

> With regard to whom did David say five times (in the *Psalms*[1]), "Bless the Lord, O my soul *(nefesh)*"? He said these words with regard to the Holy One and with regard to the soul *(neshamah)*. As the Holy One fills the entire world, so the soul *(neshamah)* fills the entire body. As the Holy One sees but is not seen, so the soul *(neshamah)* sees but is not seen. As the Holy One sustains the entire world, all of it, so the soul *(neshamah)* sustains the entire body. As the Holy One is pure, so the soul *(neshamah)* is pure. As the Holy One dwells in chambers that are innermost, so the soul *(neshamah)* dwells in chambers that are innermost.
>
> *Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 10a, in BLBR p.585:92*

Another psalm gives a voice to the soul of the psalmist, longing to renew a long-standing relationship of intimacy with God, the divine Beloved:

> As the hart (deer) longs for water streams,
>   so does my soul *(nefesh)* long for you, O God.
> My soul *(nefesh)* thirsts for God, for the living God;
> When shall I come and appear before God?
> My tears have been my bread day and night,
>   while they continually say to me, "Where is your God?"
> When I remember these things, I pour out my soul *(nefesh)*....
> Why are you cast down, O my soul *(nefesh)?*
> And why are you disquieted within me?
> Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him
>   for the help of His countenance.
> O my God, my soul *(nefesh)* is cast down within me,
>   because I remember you from the land of the Jordan,
>   and the Hermon, from Mount Miẓ'ar....
> Like a deadly wound in my bones, my enemies taunt me,
>   while they say daily to me, "Where is your God?"
> Why are you cast down, O my soul *(nefesh)?*
> And why are you disquieted within me?
> Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him,
>   who is the health of my countenance, and my God.
>
> *Psalm 42:2–12, KB*

In medieval Jewish literature, *nefesh* clearly had a spiritual connotation. The expression *hisha'arut nefesh* (sustenance of the soul) applied to the belief in the eternity of the soul. *'Olam ha-nefashim* (world of souls) was used as a poetic name for *'olam ha-ba,* the world to come, the afterlife.

Jewish mystics and philosophers of this period also differentiated between different aspects of the mind and soul, identifying *nefesh* with the life force expressed through the body, or through the emotions, sometimes representing the passions. *Neshamah,* on the other hand, was identified with the highest part of the soul, while the intermediate stage between them was known as *ruaḥ.* This distinction was probably based on passages in *Genesis* where the term *nefesh* is used for the divine force or breath that gives life to both people and animals, while *neshamah* is used only in connection with man. The rabbis thus understood *neshamah* to indicate a higher level of spirit.

The primary work of the medieval Kabbalah, the *Zohar,* comments on the level of *nefesh:*

> The *nefesh* is the lowest stimulus. It is close to the body and nourishes it. The body depends upon it, and it depends upon the body. After this, it is prepared, and becomes a throne upon which the *ruaḥ* may rest, through the stimulus of the *nefesh,* which depends upon the body….
>
> Once they have both been prepared, they are ready to receive the *neshamah,* for the *ruaḥ* becomes a throne for the *neshamah* to rest upon. This *neshamah* is hidden, the highest of all, the most concealed of all the concealed. So we see that there is a throne for a throne, and a throne for the most supreme above them. And when you examine the levels (of the soul) you will find the mystery of (divine) wisdom in this matter….
>
> Come and see. The *nefesh* is the lower stimulus that is attached to the body, like the light of a lamp. The lower light, which is black, is attached to the wick and is never separated from it, but is sustained by it alone. Once it has been sustained by the wick it becomes a throne for the upper white light *(ruaḥ),*which rests upon the black light. After they have both been sustained, the white light becomes a throne for a hidden light *(neshamah),* which cannot be seen and is not known, and which rests upon the white light, and then the light is perfect.
>
> *Zohar 1:83b, WZ2 pp.732–33*

In modern Hebrew, *nefesh* and *neshamah* are given similar meanings as the life force or spirit in all living beings. However, the *nefesh* is sometimes not differentiated from the body. For example, one might say, "I have a strong desire to travel to such and such place." In Hebrew, this would be rendered as, "The desire of my *nefesh* (my being, self) is to travel to such and such place." *Nefesh* is also used for the psychological side of a person. A person might be *ḥolei nefesh* (mentally ill), for instance. The *neshamah*, on the other hand, is clearly understood as a spiritual entity that is eternal, residing in the body during life, but moving on after death.

Like similar terms in Arabic, Persian, Ethiopian, Syriac, Aramaic, Greek, Latin and other languages, *nefesh* has conveyed a spread of meanings, over time. The nearest equivalents are probably the Arabic *nafs* (essence, mind, soul) and the Greek *psychē* (breath, soul, personality).

See also: **nafs**, **neshamah**, **ruaḥ**, **rūḥ**.

1. *Psalm* 103:1–2,22, 104:1,35.

nèi ch'ì (nèi qì) (C) *Lit.* inner *(nèi)* breath *(ch'ì)*; one of the two 'breaths' or *ch'ì* within the human body, the other being *wài ch'ì* (physical, external breath). *Nèi ch'ì* is the vital force or energy within the body that, when properly conserved and nurtured through various Taoist practices, can be returned to the pure state it was in when it entered the body at the time of birth. When these practices are perfected, the *ch'ì* unites with *yüén ch'ì*, the original or primordial 'breath' of the cosmos.

See also: **ch'ì**, **wài ch'ì**, **yüén ch'ì** (5.2).

neshamah (He) (pl. *neshamot*) *Lit.* breath, breathing thing, spirit of man, vital spirit, soul, rush of life; the immortal soul; the spiritual aspect of man; the spiritual power in man that comes from God; one of the three biblical terms for soul or spirit, the other two being *nefesh* (spirit, soul, mind, *lit.* breath) and *ruaḥ* (spirit, *lit.* wind).

The Bible uses *nishmat*, a contracted form of *neshamah* meaning 'breath of'. It first appears as the *Nishmat Ḥayyim*, the Breath of Life, which God 'breathes' into the nostrils of Adam, at the time of his creation, making him a *nefesh ḥayyah*, a living being or living soul:

> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the Breath of Life *(Nishmat Ḥayyim)*; and man became a living soul *(nefesh ḥayyah)*.
>
> *Genesis 2:7, KJV*

This "Breath" of God is the divine origin of the soul and the source of life, as in *Isaiah* where God is described as:

He that created the heavens,
  and stretched them out;
He that spread forth the earth,
  and that which comes out of it;
He that gives breath *(neshamah)* to the people upon it,
  and spirit *(ruaḥ)* to them that walk therein.

Isaiah 42:5, KB

In other biblical texts, *neshamah* is more clearly understood as the divine soul, whose light is from God:

Man's spirit *(neshamah)* is the lamp of *Yahweh,*
  searching his deepest self.

Proverbs 20:27, JB

Neshamah was also understood by Jewish commentators to be the "image" of God in which He created man, according to *Genesis.*[1] That is, the soul is of the spiritual essence of God; it is made in His image or likeness.

Neshamah, however, appears very few times in the Bible, the more commonly used term being *nefesh.* It is in rabbinic (200 BCE – 400 CE) and later medieval times that *neshamah* is used increasingly to represent the spiritual aspect of man. This is probably because, in *Genesis, neshamah* is used only in relation to the creation of man, while *nefesh* is used for the life force of both animals and man. In modern times, *neshamah* has come to mean the spiritual entity that is eternal, residing in the body during physical life. It is the spiritual essence which leaves the body at death, and can experience eternal life in *'olam ha-Emet* (the world of Truth).

A prevalent belief in rabbinic times was that a person received a pure soul from God at birth, which it was his duty to return at the time of death, unsullied by the evil of the world. Similarly, it was believed that at night, man surrendered his soul to God; he would therefore pray for it to be returned to him in the morning. It was also supposed that souls would be reunited with their bodies at the resurrection at the end of the world. Some of these beliefs clearly underlie a rabbinic prayer from the daily morning liturgy:

> O my God, the soul *(neshamah)* you have given me is pure. You created her, you formed her; you placed her within me, and you watch and protect her within me. And you will in the future take her from me, and then return her in the future that will come. While my soul *(neshamah)* yet dwells within me, I will praise and thank you, O Lord God and God of my fathers, Lord of all creation, Master of all the souls. Blessed are you, O Lord, who returns souls *(neshamot)* to dead bodies.
>
> *Jewish Prayer Book; cf. PB p.5*

Here, it is not clear whether the author is referring to this life or an afterlife when he says, "You will in the future take her from me, and then return her in the future that will come."

The *Talmud* also taught that the soul enters the body at the time of conception, and after death it has an afterlife in a spiritual realm called *'olam ha-ba* (the world to come). The souls of the righteous were thought to live in the supernal garden of Eden (heaven), while the wicked went to *Gehinnom* (hell). Most of the rabbis of the Talmudic period (100–500 CE) also believed in physical resurrection of the body at some distant future time, as a way of collecting reward (or punishment) for actions in this life. They believed that the soul, which was immortal, would be reunited with the body prior to the Day of Judgment.

According to modern scholarly opinion, these concepts of the afterlife, the Day of Judgment, and heaven and hell, as the places where souls go after death, entered Judaism during the rabbinic period (200 BCE – 400 CE). It is the prevailing opinion that there is no mention of them in this context in the Jewish scriptures. Hell, as the Pit *(Sheol),* was understood as a kind of subterranean or nether world, while heaven was the dwelling place of God, not an afterlife for the soul. The mystical interpretations of the rabbis, of the Kabbalists, of the gnostics and others, however, including the first-century Jewish commentator Philo Judaeus, as well as the evidence of the biblical texts themselves, suggest otherwise.

Another Talmudic belief was that the soul entered the body at the time of conception. The *Midrash Tanḥuma,* an eighth- or ninth-century commentary, expresses the belief that all souls were created at the time of creation, and are kept in a repository until needed for a particular body:[2]

> With the soul of Adam, the souls of all the generations of men were created. They are stored up in a promptuary (repository), in the seventh of the heavens, whence they are drawn as they are needed for human body after human body.
>
> *"The Soul of Man", from Midrashic Sources, in LB p.29, LJCD*

The *Tanḥuma* drew extensive and well-known legends concerning the birth of a soul in this world. When the soul realizes that she is being prepared for birth, she cries out to God:

> O Lord of the world! I am well pleased with the world in which I have been living since the day on which Thou didst call me into being. Why dost Thou now desire to have me enter this impure sperm, I who am holy and pure, and a part of Thy glory?
>
> *"The Soul of Man", from Midrashic Sources, in LB p.29, LJCD*

God then consoles her by promising that the world where He is sending her will be better than the world she has lived in so far. He explains that when He created her, it was with the intention of her being born into a body. The story continues:

> The soul is then forced to enter the sperm against her will, and the angel carries her back to the womb of the mother. Two angels are detailed to watch that she shall not leave it, nor drop out of it, and a light is set above her, whereby the soul can see from one end of the world to the other.
>
> *"The Soul of Man", from Midrashic Sources, in LB pp.29–30, LJCD*

In the morning, an angel takes her to paradise, where she sees the souls of righteous people who were formed, like her, in the womb of their mother. They were obedient and devoted to the *Torah,* and she understands that that is why they are now in a state of bliss. The angel counsels the soul that if she is also obedient to God's *Torah,* then when she leaves the world below, she will join the righteous in paradise. But if not, she will go to "the other place".

In the evening, the angel takes the soul to hell, where she sees sinners who are suffering and crying. The angel tells her that they were also created as she was, but they did not observe God's commandments, and followed the path of evil. So, when they left this world, they were sent to hell. The angel therefore warns the soul not to be wicked, so that she may go to the *'olam ha-ba* (the world to come), when she eventually departs from this world. Following this:

> Between morning and evening the angel carries the soul around, and shows her where she will live and where she will die, and the place where she will be buried, and he takes her through the whole world, and points out the just and the sinners and all things. In the evening, he replaces her in the womb of the mother, and there she remains for nine months.
>
> When the time arrives for her to emerge from the womb into the open world, the same angel addresses the soul, "The time has come for thee to go abroad into the open world." The soul demurs, "Why dost thou want to make me go forth into the open world?" The angel replies: "Know that as thou wert formed against thy will, so now thou wilt be born against thy will, and against thy will thou shalt die, and against thy will thou shalt give account of thyself before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He." But the soul is reluctant to leave her place.
>
> *"The Soul of Man", from Midrashic Sources, in LB p.30, LJCD*

In a mystically significant episode, the angel then causes the soul to forget the divine Wisdom or light that had been her constant companion, and she is sent forth into the world against her will:

> Then the angel fillips the babe on the nose, extinguishes the light at his head, and brings him forth into the world against his will. Immediately, the child forgets all his soul has seen and learnt, and he comes into the world crying, for he loses a place of shelter and security and rest.
>
> When the time arrives for man to quit this world, the same angel appears and asks him, "Dost thou recognize me?" And man replies, "Yes; but why dost thou come to me today, and thou didst come on no other day?" The angel says, "To take thee away from the world, for the time of thy departure has arrived." Then man falls to weeping, and his voice penetrates to all ends of the world; yet no creature hears his voice, except the cock alone.
>
> Man remonstrates with the angel, "From two worlds, thou didst take me, and into this world thou didst bring me." But the angel reminds him: "Did I not tell thee that thou wert formed against thy will, and thou wouldst be born against thy will, and against thy will thou wouldst die? And against thy will thou wilt have to give account and reckoning of thyself before the Holy One, blessed be He."
>
> *"The Soul of Man", from Midrashic Sources, in LB pp.30–31, LJCD*

Discussions in medieval times concerning the nature of the soul were commonly influenced by the teachings of the Greek philosophers, especially Plato, the Neo-Platonists and Aristotle. According to Plato the soul is immortal; similarly, the Neo-Platonists were explicit that the immortal soul comes from a higher plane and uses the body as an instrument, returning to the spiritual planes at death. The Aristotelians, on the other hand, held that a human being's spiritual essence or 'irrational soul' perishes with the body at death. Aristotle, however, also taught that a small part of the soul, the 'spiritual soul', is immortal and divine in origin. Exactly what he meant by this is unclear, but it is apparent that he did not believe in personal immortality in the sense understood by Plato.

Combining something of both the Greek and Jewish understanding, the tenth-century Jewish philosopher, Sa'adia Ga'on, taught that the soul was created at the time of birth, and was separated from it at death, only to be reunited at the time of judgment to receive its reward or punishment.

The eleventh-century sage, Moses Maimonides, taught that there is essentially one human soul, but that it expresses itself in five different ways, which he also called souls: the nutritive soul, the sensitive soul, the imaginative soul, the emotional soul and the spiritual soul.[3] At death, the first four souls perish with the body, but the fifth or spiritual soul can be developed. A person can attain immortality by developing this spiritual quality. Maimonides' way of describing the levels of the soul is very similar to that of the Sufis, among whom he lived, who also spoke of various levels of the *nafs* (soul or mind).

The primary Kabbalist text, the medieval *Zohar,* regards the soul as a spark of the divine Essence that pre-exists the creation. It says that man's essence is his divine soul, and that his body is an outer garment that has no bearing upon his true nature. The soul is viewed as imprisoned in the body, longing to return to its source:

> How does Scripture describe the creation of man? "You have clothed me with skin and flesh."[4] What then is man? If you say that he is nothing but skin and flesh, and bones and sinews, you are wrong; for, in actual truth, man is nothing but soul *(neshamah).* Clothes belong to man, but they are not man, and when man departs he is stripped of the clothes that he has put on.
>
> *Zohar 2:75b–76a, WZ2 p.680*

Like Maimonides, the Kabbalists also described a hierarchy of aspects to man's being or soul, each receiving its vitality or energy from the one above – related like links in a chain. The Kabbalists identified *nefesh* with the lowest level – to the functioning of the soul and mind at the level of the body and the senses, whose task it is to help man in his physical form. *Nefesh* is the instinctive power of feeling and action needed to sustain the body, and is identified with the emotions and passions. It represents the lower faculties and tendencies of the human mind, and is equivalent to the Sufi *nafs.*

Ruaḥ was assigned to the intermediate level between *nefesh* and *neshamah,* and was understood to bring the spirituality of the highest level to the level of *nefesh.* As such, *ruaḥ* imparts moral guidance to the *nefesh.* In this context, it can be understood as the higher mind, equivalent to the Sufi *'aql.*

Neshamah is connected with the highest and divine aspect of the soul, activated by contact with the Word or divine Wisdom *(Ḥokhmah). Neshamah* is said to exist only in human beings and represents a high degree of spirit. It is *neshamah*'s task to pull man's consciousness upwards towards realization of the Divine within him. *Neshamah* corresponds to the Sufi *rūḥ* or *jān.*

According to the *Zohar,* all three levels of man's being are active in every person, but in different proportions. It is in this way that the balance of spiritual, mental and sensual tendencies characteristic of each individual are formed. Some people, because of their higher spiritual evolution, were seen as meriting the predominating influence of *neshamah;* others only of *ruaḥ;* and still others, largely dominated by evil, were considered to be under the influence of *nefesh. Nefesh* on its own, unalleviated by the other aspects of the soul, was associated with evil.

Rabbi Moses de León, probable author of the *Zohar,* clarifies the Kabbalah's teaching on the various aspects of the soul in *Sefer ha-Nefesh ha-Ḥakhamah (Book of the Soul of Wisdom):*

> You ought to know and think upon the mystery of the *nefesh,* the *ruaḥ* and the *neshamah.* The *nefesh* is the power that is associated with the sensations of the body in all matters that are connected with the blood, and in all the factors that sustain the body throughout its life, through perception of this world with respect to everything that the body needs. This preserves the body....
>
> The *ruaḥ* is the power that enables the *nefesh* to maintain itself in the body, for the *nefesh* survives only because of the power of the *ruaḥ,* which acts like the breeze that blows. It is because of the *ruaḥ* that man is sustained by the power of the *nefesh,* for if the *ruaḥ* were withheld from the *nefesh,* this would bring death in its train, for the *nefesh* would not be able to maintain itself in the body.
>
> The *neshamah* is a matter of true spirit *(sekhel).* It is hewn from the source of life, and from the wellspring of intelligence and Wisdom. Glory comes to dwell in the body in order to sustain everything for the service of the Creator, in order to pride Him with substance.
>
> *Moses de León, Sefer ha-Nefesh ha-Ḥakhamah 1:3.1a–1b; cf. in WZ2 p.686*

In the *Zohar,* Moses de León explains the levels of the soul in relation to the *sefirot* – the successive emanations of the divine qualities:

> Rabbi Bun began by quoting, "With my soul *(nefesh)* I desired You in the night, and with my spirit *(ruaḥ)* within me have I sought You early."[5]
>
> "With my *nefesh* I desired You": The Holy One, blessed be He, gave two fine crowns to man for him to use in this world, namely, *nefesh* and *ruaḥ:* the *nefesh* to sustain the body by means of the commandments, so that it might be stimulated by it; and the *ruaḥ* to stimulate it by means of the *Torah,* and to guide it in this world (moral guidance). If they are worthy enough, ... then a greater eminence will descend upon it from above, depending on the paths it follows. Man moves through this world with these two crowns that are for his use; for the *nefesh* cannot survive in the body without being stimulated by the *ruaḥ,* which rests above it.
>
> When man begins to serve and worship his Creator with these two, he is stimulated by a holy stimulus from above, which rests upon man and surrounds him on every side, and it stimulates him through supernal Wisdom *(Ḥokhmah),* so that he may be rewarded with life in the palace of the King (the Holy One, God). This stimulus that dwells

> within him comes from an exalted place. And what is its name? *Neshamah.* The *neshamah* is a higher power than that which is called *ruaḥ*, because the *ruaḥ* was provided by the Holy One, blessed be He, for service in this world; while the *neshamah* always acts as a stimulus for service in the upper realms.
>
> Man is prompted by it *(neshamah)* to repent and to engage in good deeds, and it is a supernal power, the power of repentance, the mother of the *ruaḥ;* and the *ruaḥ* is her son.
>
> Above the *neshamah* there is an exalted lover. And what is its name? The *neshamah* of the *neshamah* – and it is called "the father of the *ruaḥ*". It stimulates awe (of God) in man. And so they (the three parts of man's being) are from father, mother, son and daughter (the *sefirot* of *Ḥokhmah, Binah, Tiferet* and *Malkut*).
>
> *Zohar Ḥadash (Midrash Ruth) 82c–82d; cf. WZ2 pp.729–30*

Later Kabbalists, like Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed, described five levels of soul in all, adding two higher levels of *ḥayyah* (vitality, life) and *yeḥidah* (union, unique). Luria taught that these two higher levels are manifested only in those rare, spiritually evolved individuals who have attained levels of spirituality even higher than *neshamah.* According to this system, *nefesh, ruaḥ* and *neshamah* would only pertain to man's functioning at the level of body, mind and higher mind.

The five aspects or types of soul described by Luria were also viewed as corresponding to the realms *('olamim)* of creation: *azilut* (emanation, the spiritual level); *briah* (creation, the causal level of mind); *yeẓirah* (formation, the astral level of mind); and *'assiah* (making, the physical realm). According to this division, both *yeḥidah* and *ḥayyah* originate at different stages of the spiritual realm of *aẓilut.*

Using a much simpler system, the ḤaBaD *Ḥasidim* of the eighteenth century spoke of two souls in man: the animal soul, referring to man's lower tendencies, and the divine soul, signifying his spiritual yearnings.

See also: **ātman**, **gilgul** (6.3), **ḥayyah**, **hún**, **jān**, **nefesh**, **ruaḥ**, **Ruaḥ** (3.1), **rūḥ**, **soul**, **surat**, **yeḥidah**.

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1. *Genesis* 1:27.
2. The translations in this and the following quotes from Louis Ginzberg's compilation, *Legends of the Bible,* are from the German, but the term used for soul in the original would almost certainly have been *neshamah.*
3. 'Spiritual soul' is generally rendered by scholars as 'rational soul'. 'Rational', however, relates to the divine *Logos,* commonly translated as Reason or Word, these being its meanings in a mundane context. But the 'rational soul' is a part of a human being far higher than reason or intelligence.

It is the immortal soul, a part of the divine Intelligence or creative Power – the *Logos*. 'Spiritual soul' therefore is a better rendering of the meaning.

4. *Job* 10:11.
5. *Isaiah* 26:9.

nij (H) *Lit.* own, personal, special, proper, peculiar, particular; mystically, that which is real, higher, innermost, primal, first; also, though not necessarily, of the same essence as the Lord. Such expressions as *nij dhām* (real home) and *nij man* (innermost mind) exemplify the mystical use of the term.

nij man (H) *Lit.* innermost *(nij)* mind *(man);* specifically, the higher or causal mind *(kāraṇ man);* that part of the mind which is associated with the *kāraṇ sharīr* (causal body), and which carries the seeds or impressions of all actions within itself.

The term is also used more generally for the mind as it functions on any of the inner planes. Hence, Bābā Jaimal Singh writes to Bābā Sāwan Singh:

> Develop strong love for the *Shabd Dhun* inside. Even if you are not able to sit (in meditation), mentally keep your devotion while walking, sitting, moving about or sleeping. Keep the *man* and the *nij man* in the *Shabd Dhun.*
>
> *Bābā Jaimal Singh, Spiritual Letters 20, SLO p.38*

Kabīr also writes of the *nij man* as the mind when held in concentration at the eye centre, the two-petalled *chakra* behind the eyes:

> Above that (the throat centre), O brother, is the *kanj kanwal,*
> a dual-formed stage of black and white.
> There the *nij man* reigns, behind the eyes.
>
> *Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Bhed Bānī 22:8, KSS1 p.65*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh equates the *nij man* with the mind in *sahans dal kanwal:*

> Below this *(trikuṭī,* universal mind) is the region of *sahans dal kanwal....* All *avatārs* of the second degree, prophets, *awliyās* and *yogīs* of a high order come from this region and return to it. *Faqīrs* and Saints call it *nij man.*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 1:15, SB p.12*

See also: **kāraṇa sharīra**, **kāraṇ man**.

nitya (S/H) *Lit.* eternal, everlasting, perpetual, ceaseless, immutable, regular, fixed, constant, essential; beyond time, rather than forever in time; descriptive of God and also of the soul as a part of the divine Ocean. The *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gītā* both describe the soul as a part of the eternity of the supreme Reality:

> The One who is eternal *(nitya)* among the transient *(anitya),*
> the consciousness of the conscious,
> the One among the many, fulfilling their desires –
> To the wise who perceive Him dwelling within the soul,
> is eternal peace, and to no others.
>
> *Kaṭha Upanishad 2:2.13*

> Know the eternal *(nitya) Brahman,*
> dwelling within the soul;
> Truly, beyond that, there is nothing else to be known.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 1:12*

> It (the soul) can be neither cut nor burnt,
> neither wetted nor dried.
> It is eternal *(nitya),* all-pervading,
> unchanging and immovable;
> It is the same forever.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 2:24; cf. BGT*

See also: **nitya** (2.1).

padma (S/H), **padam** (H/Pu) *Lit.* lotus; used extensively as a metaphor in Indian mysticism, symbolizing purity, mystic knowledge and higher consciousness. The lotus, with its many symmetrically arranged petals, is also used as a symbol for the centres of energy or creative power within the creation. The six *chakras* or subtle life energy centres of the human body, for instance, are also known as the six lotuses *(khaṭ padma).* In the case of these *chakras* and other energy centres, the energy aspects, rays or major divisions of energy and function are depicted as the petals of a lotus. The mystic Charaṇdās, for instance, describes the thousand-petalled lotus in the astral region as a *padam:*

> In the lotus *(padam)* which is located
> in the midst of the sky,
> there reverberates the unstruck drum.

It is a thousand-petalled lotus.
Only the brave ones who follow the *Guru*'s instructions
can reach it.

Charaṇdās, in Sant Bānī Sangrah 1, Sumiran 4, SBS1 p.135

See also: **chakra**, **kamala**, **padma** (▸2).

pakshī (S/H), **pankhī**, **panchhī** (H/Pu) *Lit.* bird; a common symbol for the soul in the metaphorical language of mystics.

See **bird**.

pānī (H), **pāṇī** (Pu) *Lit.* water; esoterically, one of the five *tattvas,* having both subtle and gross aspects.

See also: **jala**, **svādhishṭhāna chakra**, **tattva**.

paramahaṃsa (S/H), **paramhaṃs** (H), **paramhans** (Pu) *Lit.* supreme *(param)* swan or goose *(haṃsa);* supreme soul; an epithet of a pure and realized soul, frequently used as a title for holy men in India, where the romanized spelling is commonly *paramhansa.*

See also: **haṃsa**, **paramahaṃsa** (▸2).

particle of light An expression commonly used by Mānī and the later Manichaeans for the individual soul as a particle of the supreme light of God.

See also: **nature of light**.

patang (H/Pu) *Lit.* a paper kite. Mystically, the soul in its upward ascent during meditation is said to resemble a kite that flies high in the sky, but remains connected by a thread to the body. Just as a kite is drawn down by its thread, so too is the soul drawn back to the body after a flight into the inner regions. It is the unfinished *prārabdh karma* which draws the soul back to the body, even if the soul has no desire to continue its life down here. Only when these are finished can the thread be cut. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes of flying the "kite of my soul":

> Ever blessed by my *Guru*'s feet
> I fly the kite *(patang)* of my soul.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 33:12.21, SBP p.273*

A similar idea is also mentioned in the biblical book of *Ecclesiastes,* where it is called the silver cord.

The word should not be confused with *patang,* referring to a bird and several kinds of insect.

See also: **silver cord**.

pavan(a) (S/H) *Lit.* air; the gaseous state of matter; one of the five *tattvas* having both gross and subtle aspects.

See also: **tattva**.

pearl A hard, smooth and lustrous object formed inside the shell of a clam or oyster, much valued as a gem, and consisting of calcium carbonate secreted around a foreign object such as a particle of sand; mystically, a metaphor used for the soul. Wrapped in the flesh of a gnarled and barnacled oyster is the most unlikely place to find such a treasure. Similarly, the spiritual pearl is to be found wrapped within the flesh of a 'barnacled' and sinful human being.

The term is commonly used in gnostic and allied texts. In the *Assumption of the Virgin,* an apocryphal account of the death of Jesus' mother, Jesus refers to Mary's soul as "most precious pearl":

> The Saviour spake, saying:
> "Come, most precious pearl,
> enter into the treasury of eternal life."
> *Assumption of the Virgin VII; ANT p.212*

However much it may be enfolded and wrapped, the pearl – like the soul – still retains its value. As the writer of the gnostic *Gospel of Philip* puts it:

> When the pearl is cast down into the mud,
> it does not lose its value,
> Nor if it is anointed with balsam oil
> does it become more precious.
> But it always has value in the eyes of its owner.

Compare the sons of God, wherever they may be.
They retain their value in the eyes of their Father.

Gospel of Philip 62; cf. GS pp.337, NHS20 pp.164–65

The soul as a pearl is used extensively in Manichaean texts, being a common image for the soul used by the third-century Iranian mystic, Mānī. In the *Kephalaia,* in an extended parable attributed to Mānī, he explains how pearls in their shells, formed in the sea from drops of pure rain water, represent living souls imprisoned in human bodies, and they are brought up from the depths of the sea (this world) by the pearl divers (the Apostles, the Messengers, the Saviours).

The pearl divers know exactly when to collect the pearls, and each diver finds those pearls which are "ordained for him" by "destiny". The divers then give these pearls to the "traders", who pass them on to the "kings and the nobles":

Then immediately at the right time,
  known to the pearl divers, …
  they go down to those places
  and bring the pearls up from the depths of the sea;
And each pearl diver finds according to the destiny
  that is ordained for him.
The pearl divers give them to the traders,
  and the traders give them to the kings and the nobles.

Kephalaia I:83 pp.203:32–204:4; cf. KOT p.212

This, he continues, is how the "holy church", meaning the community of his disciples, is formed. They are souls or pearls brought up from the depth of the sea of transmigration (a well-documented feature of Mānī's teachings):

This is also what the holy church is like.
It shall be a gathering of living souls,
  gathered up and brought to the Heights,
  raised from the sea and placed in the flesh of mankind;
While the flesh of mankind itself
  is like the shell and the pearl shell.

Kephalaia I:83 p.204:5–9; cf. KOT p.212

The "traders," he goes on, are the "light givers of the heavens," possibly representing the rulers of the higher realms encountered by the soul on the upward ascent to God. And the "kings and the nobles" who finally purchase and keep the souls are the "*aeons* of greatness" or the "*aeons* of light" – the powers that dwell in eternity:

The booty that shall be seized is like the drop of rainwater,
  while the Apostles are like the divers.
The traders are the light givers of the heavens;
The kings and nobles are the *aeons* of greatness.

For all the souls that ascend while in the human flesh,
  and are freed, will be brought back to the great *aeons* of light.
A place of rest comes about for them,
  at that place in the *aeons* of greatness.

Kephalaia I:83 p.204:10–17; cf. KOT p.212

In conclusion, he encourages his disciples, his "good pearls", to keep on with the spiritual struggle, so that the Saviour in his spiritual form, the "Diver of light", can meet them in the heavenly realms, and take them back to the "great chief Merchant", God:

You too, my beloved ones, struggle in every way
  so that you will become good pearls,
  and be met in heaven by the Diver of light.
He will come to you,
  and bring you back to the great chief Merchant,
  and you will rest in (eternal) life forever.

Kephalaia I:83 p.204:17–23; cf. KOT p.212

The pearl has a long history as a spiritual metaphor. It is first encountered in the ancient Sumerian myth, the *Epic of Gilgamesh,* where the hero, going in search of the Herb of Immortality, finds it in the depths of the sea. But, on his homeward journey, he is robbed of it by a serpent, when he goes to bathe. Although the Herb of Life is not specifically identified as a pearl in the extant versions of the story, the motif is common on Sumerian pottery, as a pearl being guarded by a serpent.

The pearl also appears as a central feature of the well-known gnostic allegory, the *Hymn of the Pearl,* also called the *Robe of Glory.*[1] The soul, allegorized as the son of royal parents, is sent on a quest to recover the pearl, which is guarded by a "loud-breathing" and ever wakeful serpent (the mind). Here, the pearl symbolizes the soul's innate spirituality, which has been forgotten in its descent to this world.

The pearl is also used specifically to mean the creative Power.

See also: **pearl** (3.1).

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[1] *Robe of Glory, Acts of Thomas* IX, in *e.g. AAA, ANT, HS, RG.*

Pharaoh (A./P. *Fir'awn*) The title of ancient Egyptian monarchs, some of whom were tyrannical in character. The story of Pharaoh and Moses *(Mūsá)* is retold repeatedly in the *Qur'ān,* though seemingly not with any symbolic significance except that Pharaoh is always depicted as the epitome of evil. The Sufis, however, retold aspects of the story to illustrate mystic teachings. Pharaoh represents not only an utterly worldly man in relation to Moses (who symbolizes spirituality), but also the kingship of this world. He represents the power, existing in every individual, that resists spiritual evolution. In many instances, therefore, Pharaoh symbolizes the human mind:

> In *Ṣūfī* language, *Fir'awn* (Pharaoh) denotes mind, I-ness and pride.
> *Javad Nūrbakhsh, Sufi Symbolism, FNI3 p.181; cf. in SSE3 p.224*

And 'Aṭṭār writes:

> When I was liberated from the Pharaoh of existence,
> each moment, like Moses, I was at the rendezvous (with God).
> *'Aṭṭār, in FNI3 p.181*

The story of Moses, Pharaoh and the Israelites was so well known that the Sufis used it in many different ways. Pointing out that the first step in spirituality is to control the *nafs* (the lower mind), Rūmī says:

> The mind *(nafs)* is a follower of Pharaoh:
> Beware, do not satisfy it,
> lest it remember its ancient infidelity.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:3621; cf. MJR4 p.471*

"Its ancient infidelity" is Satan's disobedience to God's order, for which he was exiled from heaven. Pharaoh also claimed divinity before his people, and was cursed for it. Metaphorically, this is no more than every unenlightened being does, unconsciously perhaps, claiming partnership with God. Each man thinks of himself as 'king' in his own realm. So long as *fanā'* (annihilation) has not been experienced through mystic practice, the ego remains on the throne, and the individual is still effectively claiming Godhood. Rūmī points out the difference between a Saint's expression of his oneness with God, and the claim to divinity made by Pharaoh:

> "I am God *(anā al-Ḥaqq)*" on the lips of Manṣūr
> was the light of truth;
> "I am *Allāh*" on the lips of Pharaoh was a lie.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:305, MJR2 p.237*

Mystics repeatedly emphasize the need to control the mind *(nafs).* As 'Aṭṭār says:

> They killed the Pharaoh of the mind by spiritual practice,
> and thereafter gave their hearts to Moses' fire.
>
> *'Aṭṭār, in FN13 p.181*

"Moses' fire" means the light of God. 'Aṭṭār is referring to the story in which God reveals Himself to Moses through a burning bush which is not consumed by the fire.[1] Only when the mind is controlled, and the lower nature "killed" does the inner light become visible. Rūmī, here taking Moses to epitomize the Saint, writes that he is tired of the "tyranny" of the mind; he longs to see the light of his Master within:

> My soul is grown weary of Pharaoh and his tyranny:
> I desire the light of the countenance of Moses.
>
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 441:4636, KSD1 p.255, KDS1 p.203, SDST (XVI) pp.66–67*

Likening God to the "Worker" and the higher reality to the "workshop", he enlarges on the metaphor of Pharaoh as the lower mind. Pharaoh, he says, does not enter the divine "workshop" of "Nonexistence" where God can be seen at "work" in His creation. Consequently, he thinks that he can change his destiny by his own effort and manipulations. This is the nature of the mind:

> Since the workshop is the dwelling place of the Worker,
> he that is outside is unaware of Him.
> Come, then, into the workshop,
> that is to say, Nonexistence,
> that you may see the work and the Worker together.
> As the workshop is the place of inner vision,
> then outside the workshop there is (only) blindfoldness.
>
> The rebellious Pharaoh kept his face towards existence:
> therefore, he was blind to His (God's) workshop.
> Consequently, he desired to alter predestination,
> that he might turn back destiny from his door.
> Truly, every moment destiny was laughing derisively under its lip
> at the moustache (arrogance) of that cunning plotter.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:761–66; cf. MJR2 pp.260–61*

Even so, in Islam, God is *al-Hādī* (the Guide) and *al-Muḍill* (the Misleader). In a rare passage, demonstrating some sympathy for poor Pharaoh, the human mind that gives man his sense of "I", Rūmī writes:

At midnight Pharaoh would begin to weep, saying,
"O God, what shackle is this on my neck?
Were it not for the shackle, who would say 'I am I'?
By that whereby You have illumined Moses,
by that You have made me to be darkened."

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2448–50; cf. MJR2 p.133

Pharaoh also appears in earlier Jewish literature as a metaphor for man's lower nature or possibly the devil. In the biblical *Song of Songs,* the Beloved says:

To my mare, harnessed to Pharaoh's chariot,
I compare you, my love.
Your cheeks show fair between their pendants
and your neck within its necklaces.
We shall make you golden earrings
and beads of silver.

Song of Songs 1:9–11, JB

To Middle Easterners, horses were always creatures of great value and beauty, so the comparison of the lover to a beautiful mare is a compliment. The lover symbolizes the soul. She is beautiful, but is in harness to the evil ruler, Pharaoh. The eye of the Beloved can even see the beauty of the soul between all the extravagant ornaments and embellishments – the coverings of physical existence. But the divine Beloved will give her gold for her ears, symbolizing spiritual hearing, and silver, representing spiritual light.

See also: **Egypt** (6.2), **exile** (6.2).

1. *Exodus* 3:2–5.

physical body The body of flesh and blood, formed of physical matter, for use in the physical universe. It is commonly said to be comprised of two parts – the gross aspect with which everyone is familiar, and the subtle or etheric body through which subtle life energies flow. The most developed descriptions of the body's subtle energy system are the Chinese mapping of the flow of *ch'ì* (vital energy), especially as understood in the various schools of acupuncture, and the Indian yogic descriptions of the *prāṇa* (subtle life energy), the *chakras* (centres of pranic energy), the *nāḍīs* (channels of pranic energy) and so on.

See also: **deh, kāyā, man, nar deh, nar nārāyaṇī deh, tan.**

piṇḍī man (H/Pu) *Lit.* physical *(piṇḍī)* mind *(man);* the material mind; the individual or human mind; the mind which governs the physical frame and the senses, and through which come the impulses by which the web of destiny is spun; the mind which manifests itself in the ordinary affairs of everyday life.

It is the *piṇḍī man* which is drawn out into the world of the senses and emotions. Its tendencies are outward, diffusive, material and egocentric, and it is very difficult to control. It functions almost entirely by habit, resenting all attempts to break those habits, even if it knows that they cause it pain. All sensory pleasures, all worldly attractions, all passions, emotions and weaknesses, as well as strengths and virtues, are experienced within this mind. Everything human lies within or passes through the *piṇḍī man.*

The *piṇḍī man* has its centre of function in the four-petalled centre at the base of *aṇḍa,* known as the *antaḥkaraṇa,* but its primary seat of activity in a human being is at the eye centre. In most people, however, the mind drops below the point of conscious control at the eye centre, and functions through the heart or lower centres. Only very rarely, if at all, does it come up to the eye centre, the centre where thought becomes clear and logical. Because of this, much mental activity and underlying motivation drop into the unconscious or subconscious. Human beings then act, but without ever knowing or understanding what their real motivations or intentions are. In fact, there is a school of thought which believes that the centre of thought and being lies in the heart centre.

The first part of the meditational practice prescribed by the Saints is to regain some degree of control of the mind by bringing it back to the eye centre by means of *sumiran* or *simran* (repetition). From there, the mind can begin to catch the Sound Current which is the only force which can fully control the mind. When the individual rises up to the astral and causal planes, the lower phases of the mind are shed. Mahārāj Sāwan Singh writes to one of his disciples:

> The finite mind *(piṇḍī man)* which was working on the physical plane, on entering the astral, casts off one covering and merges into the finer phase of the mind, loses its separate existence, and becomes a subtle mind. It has knowledge of the two planes and can function on these two.
>
> When it has entered the causal plane by casting off the astral covering, its range extends to the third plane and it is higher, but still mind. The universe of those who call the mind universal or infinite, extends to the causal plane, and often only to the astral. They have not penetrated further. Their infinity is finite in the experience and terminology of the Saints. Their 'God' is the 'mind' of *Sant Mat* (Teachings of the Saints).
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 106, SG pp.154–55*

See also: **antaḥkaraṇa**, **man**.

pingalā (S/H/Pu), **pingulā** (Pu) *Lit.* reddish yellow; one of the three currents, *iḍā, pingalā* and *sushumṇā,* flowing through all creation below *trikuṭī* (universal mind), and down into the physical body as one of the three primary *nāḍīs* or channels of *prāṇa.*

See **iḍā**.

p'ò (pò) (C) *Lit.* earthly soul; one of two aspects of soul *(líng hún). P'ò* is the earthly or sentient aspect of the soul which is passive or *yīn* in nature, and regulates the lower physical and mental functions. The other aspect of soul is *hún,* which is heavenly, spiritual, active, and therefore *yáng* in nature. At the time of death, it is believed that *p'ò* returns to the earth, and lingers near the corpse until it disintegrates.

See also: **hsīn**, **hún**, **kuǐ** (4.2), **líng hún**.

prāṇ(a) (S/H), **prān** (Pu) *Lit.* breath, air, wind; hence also, subtle life breath, life force, subtle life energy; from *pra* (before) + *an* (to breathe). In many languages, including Sanskrit and Hindi, the words for breath, wind and spirit – as the essence of life – are the same. This is not so in English, however, and hence common renderings of *prāṇa* as 'vital air', 'vital breath' or 'vital wind' fail to convey the full meaning intended. *Prāṇa* is both the physical breath and the subtle life energy of the body. As a subtle energy, *prāṇa* is active in inert matter as well as living creatures.

The real life force within all creatures is soul or consciousness, this being a drop of the divine ocean of God. Living beings are unconscious of the incredibly complex and dynamic physiological processes which result from the soul and mind dwelling in a material body. Most of these processes continue without any conscious input at all. There is, for example, a gap in consciousness between the mental intention to walk, and actually walking. The conscious individual is quite unconscious of the intricate nervous, muscular and many other biological processes that are involved in 'simply' walking. All the intermediate processes between the conscious decision to walk and walking itself are unconscious. Even the brain functions associated with the original intention happen automatically and unconsciously. All this is taken for granted, and it is only when the system malfunctions for some reason that the individual becomes aware of how little real control can be exercised over bodily processes. All this is due to the presence of the life force, *prāṇa*, controlling and activating all bodily processes. *Prāṇa* is directed by the mind, and the mind is activated by the soul.

Prāṇa is essentially the diffused power of the *Shabd* (Word) or Life Force, the presence of God's will in everything, which holds together the inert matter of *piṇḍa*. Interpreting *prāṇa* in modern terminology, *prāṇa* is also responsible for the forces that science calls gravity and electromagnetism. These two forces are really effects or physical manifestations of the inner coherence furnished by *prāṇa*. In fact, the physical universe is really only changing patterns in space, demonstrating that creation comes into being through movement in that which is eternally existent. Physical space is one aspect of the *ākāsha tattva*, a field of potentiality woven into material forms through the force of *prāṇa*, itself a derivative of the primal creative Power of the *Shabd* (Word).

Prāṇa acting upon the *ākāsha tattva* produces all physical forms, which dance and spin into existence out of the akashic state of space. For this reason, matter is at its most intensely active in the subatomic state, where all particles continuously spin, dance and vibrate. *Prāṇa* is thus the primary force in the physical universe from which all other forces are derived. The *prāṇa* itself, however, is patterned or moved by the mind according to the requirements of the karmic law and the individual destiny of each soul. The physical creation is therefore powered by the *Shabd*, through the *prāṇas*, but is patterned and administered by the mind according to the requirements of *karma*.

In the body, *prāṇa* is described as the vital air or vital breath because, when breathing ceases, the body dies. Similarly, withdrawal of the *prāṇa* means the death of the physical body. Additionally, control of physical breathing is used by yogis in the practice of *prāṇāyāma* to concentrate the mind on the rhythm of outer breathing as well as on the subtle *prāṇa* itself. Because *prāṇa* is the power behind all manifestation on the physical plane, a yogi who has gained control of the *prāṇa* has also gained control of the physical universe, thereby acquiring what seem to be miraculous powers. This, however, is not so easy, for to gain control of the *prāṇa* requires gaining control over the mind, which is exceptionally difficult, and needs to be practised under expert supervision.

Prāṇa is thus the intelligence or cause lying behind the tremendous order and organization of all bodily functions, as well as the universe at large. It is not visible to the five physical sense organs, and can thus be described as a subtle form of energy.

Like all matter, the bodies of living creatures are made up of the five elemental states of matter known as the *tattvas*. In inert matter, this is expressed as relatively simple and quiescent internal processes, as perceived at the molecular, atomic and subatomic levels. In a living body, however, these elemental states are held together in an incredibly active, ordered and integrated fashion. This is all the work of the *prāṇas.* When a person dies, the *prāṇas* are withdrawn and the body immediately begins to decompose. The activity and organization ceases. Integration gives way to disintegration.

As the pranic currents weave patterns in the five tattvic states, five variations or effects in the pranic current come into being. These are *vāyu* or *prāṇa* (air), *apāna* (earth), *samāna* (fire), *vyāna* (water) and *udāna (ākāsha,* ether). These are all *prāṇa:*

> *Prāṇa, apāna, vyāna, udāna, samāna* and *ana* –
> all these are nothing but *prāṇa.*
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 1:5.3*

Here, *ana* (breath) is a general term for all the *prāṇas.* Confusingly, the *prāṇa* which has its focus at the heart centre is itself known as *prāṇa,* since the heart is a centre of pranic organization. *Vāyu,* like *prāṇa,* also means air and is used more or less synonymously with *prāṇa.* One of the yogic texts, the *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā,* speaks of five *vāyus* of the subtle body and five of the gross body:

> *Prāṇa* always moves in the heart; *apāna* in the region of anus; *samāna* in the navel region; *udāna* in the throat; and *vyāna* pervades the whole body. These are the five principal *vāyus,* known as *prāṇa* and so on. They belong to the inner (subtle physical) body. The five *vāyus* – *nāga* (snake) and so on – belong to the outer (gross) body.
>
> *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā 5:61–62; cf. GSV p.46*

The *Shiva Saṃhitā* provides more detail:

> In the heart, there is a brilliant lotus with twelve petals adorned with brilliant markings. It has the (Sanskrit) letters *ka* to *ṭha,* the twelve beautiful letters.
>
> The *prāṇa* lives there, adorned with various desires, accompanied by its past works that have no beginning, and joined with egotism *(ahankāra).*
>
> From the different modifications of *prāṇa,* it receives various names. All of them cannot be stated here. (They include): *prāṇa, apāna, samāna, udāna, vyāna, nāga* (snake), *kūrma* (tortoise), *kṛikara* (partridge), *devadatta* (given by god) and *dhananjaya* (conqueror of wealth).
>
> These are the ten principal names described by me in this *shāstra;* they perform all the (bodily) functions, driven thereto by their own character.

> Again, out of these ten, the first five are the leading ones. Even among these, the *prāṇa* and the *apāna* are the highest agents, in my opinion.
>
> The seat of the *prāṇa* is the heart; of the *apāna,* the anus; of the *samāna,* the region about the navel; of the *udāna,* the throat; while the *vyāna* moves throughout the body.
>
> The remaining *vāyus,* the *nāga,* etc., perform the following functions in the body – belching, opening the eyes, hunger and thirst, gaping or yawning, and lastly hiccupping.
>
> He who, in this way, knows the microcosm of the body, being absolved from all sins, reaches the highest state.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 3:1–9; cf. SSV pp.22–23*

The five *prāṇas* have their own fields of activity. *Apāna* oversees the processes of evacuation and elimination through the bowels. Its administrative centre is the earthy or *mūlādhāra chakra* and its administrative extent includes the stomach, genital system, the calves and the anus. *Samāna,* meaning equal, has its centre in the navel *chakra* and administers the distribution of nourishment equally to all parts of the body. It is involved in the processes of digestion and assimilation. *Udāna* is administered from the throat *chakra,* in the neck. It flows through all the joints, anus, feet and the activities of the eyes and vocal organs. Rising up the throat and passing into the head, it helps concentration and takes the soul from one body to another at the time of death. *Prāṇa,* as an expression of the airy *tattva,* functions through the mouth, eyes and nose, from its centre in the heart. It spreads out and runs from the nose to the stomach, navel and the toes of the feet. Its primary function is respiration. *Vyāna,* which is associated with the water *tattva,* pervades throughout the body, and administers the circulatory and reproductive systems.

The five *prāṇas* or *vāyus* associated with the gross body, and described in some texts, are *nāga* (snake), which causes vomiting and belching; *kūrma* (tortoise), which controls blinking and the closing of the eyelids in sleep; *kṛikara* (partridge), which regulates hunger and thirst; *devadatta* (given by god), which controls yawning and dozing; and *dhananjaya* (conqueror of wealth), which some texts describe as controlling hiccupping, while others say that it nourishes the body.[1]

The above is only a very broad and general outline of an intensely dynamic and integrated system. In effect, all parts and systems of the body are influenced by all aspects of the five *prāṇas,* through the five centres of organization *(chakras).*

See also: **ākāsha, chakra, ch'ì, prāṇāyāma** (▸2), **tattva**.

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[1] Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāra* 2:85.

prāṇamaya-kosha (S) *Lit.* sheath or covering *(kosha)* filled with or made up of *(maya)* subtle life energy *(prāṇa);* the second of the five *koshas* covering the *ātman* or soul, according to the *Upanishads,* consisting of the integrated network of subtle, life-endowing, pranic energies.

See **kosha**.

pre-existence of the soul The existence of the soul prior to taking birth in human form; often used as a compromise philosophical solution between reincarnation and the belief that all souls are created by God at conception or birth. Pre-existence was a prevalent belief in early Christianity, later condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council, convened in 553 CE by the Emperor Justinian.

See also: **gilgul** (6.3), **immortality of the soul**, **neshamah**, **reincarnation and transmigration (in Christianity)** (6.3).

pṛithvī (S/H), **prithvī** (Pu) *Lit.* earth; the solid state of matter; one of the five *tattvas* possessing both gross and subtle aspects.

See also: **tattva**.

purī (S/H/Pu), **pura** (S) *Lit.* city, town; in a mystic context, the human body has been described as a city with nine gates, doors or exits leading outward, and a secret or hidden tenth gate leading inwards. The nine outward openings are the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth and the two lower openings. Through them, the attention goes out into the world. The tenth gate lies in the head above the other openings; it is the single eye, the eye centre or the third eye lying above and between the two eyes.

The *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* describes the descent of the soul to this world, saying that "the supreme Self … moves outward, becoming embodied in the city of nine gates *(pura-nava-dvāra).*"[1] And the *Bhagavad Gītā* says that an "embodied soul" who has controlled the mind and senses, "resides contentedly in the city of nine gates *(nava-dvāra-pura)*".[2]

The *Kaṭha Upanishad* adds two more to this nine and speaks of the body as a "city with eleven gates".[3] The first addition is generally understood to be the *chakra* (subtle life energy centre) situated on a level with the navel. The second is the *Brahmarandhra,* the centre at the upper end of the central spinal channel of subtle life energy *(sushumṇā nāḍī),* which is variously located by different texts either on the crown of the head or at the root of the palate. The door at the navel *chakra* is a gateway through which some souls are understood to leave the body and move around in the physical world in a subtle body.

However, Saints have commonly spoken of ten doors, the tenth door being the eye centre, the *ājñā chakra,* behind and between the two eyebrows. It is through this centre that the soul passes on leaving the body, either during meditation or at death. It is therefore possible that one of the two additional doors referred to in the *Kaṭha Upanishad* is this eye centre.

See also: **city of nine gates, nau dwār**.

1. *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* 3:18.
2. *Bhagavad Gītā* 5:13.
3. *Kaṭha Upanishad* 2:2.1.

purush cholā (H/Pu) *Lit.* garment *(cholā)* of man *(purush);* the human body.

See also: **cholā, robe**.

raiment See **robe**.

ravān (P) *Lit.* running, flowing; as in running water; hence, the free soul or spirit, the wandering spirit; derived from the *Qur'ān.*[1] For many of the translators of Persian mystic writings into English, *ravān* is seen as synonymous with *nafs-i nāṭiqah* (*lit.* the rational spirit, the spiritual soul) and *rūḥ-i insānī* (the human spirit), so that it is generally found in translation as 'rational soul' or 'rational spirit'.

The Iranian philosopher and physician, Ibn Sīnā (980–1037 CE), is credited with being the first to make a distinction between *jān* (spirit, life) and *ravān.* In this context, *jān* is the spirit as it functions in a normal human being, constrained by the limits of physicality. The same spirit is called *ravān,* when it 'flows' free from the limitations of self and attachment to the physical body. Rūmī is alluding to Ibn Sīnā when he explains:

What is *im'ān?* – Causing the spring to flow:
When the spirit *(jān)* has escaped from the body,
  they call it *ravān.*
The philosopher whose spirit *(jān)* was delivered
  from the bondage of the body,
  and began to wander freely *(ravān)* in the garden of Reality,

bestowed two titles on these two spirits
in order to distinguish them.
O may his spirit *(jān)* be blest!
Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:2187–89; cf. MJR6 p.380

The meaning behind the imagery of flowing water for the rising and freed spirit becomes more evident when the running water *(āb-i ravān)* of the spirit is depicted as flowing into the divine Ocean:

We are the running water *(āb-i ravān),*
You the ocean of Life.
Seeking You, we face You on every side.
Mir'āt-i 'Ushshāq, in TAT p.165, in FNI4 p.28; cf. in SSE4 p.27

Rūmī describes the inner transformation that begins when a person receives a hint, a "clue", of the truth, beauty and reality that lie hidden within. That which was dormant awakens; that which was dead quickens. The *jān* becomes *ravān:*

That clue becomes balm to your sick soul;
It brings colour to your face,
and health and strength to you.
Your eye becomes bright, your foot nimble;
Your body becomes vital soul *(jān),*
and your vital soul *(jān),* the spirit *(ravān).*
Rūmī, Maśnavī II:2981–82; cf. MJR2 p.376

The spirit within a Saint is *ravān.* This *ravān* is actually the reality of a Master; his physical form is a mere illusion, a "form of fantasy *(khayāl)*". This *ravān* is what draws the disciple to the Master, as running water draws a thirsty man. However, this physical form of a Master is also unspeakably attractive in the eyes of the disciple:

He saw a person excellent and worshipful,
a sun amidst a shadow,
coming from afar, like the new moon:
He was nonexistent,
though existent in the form of fantasy *(khayāl).*
In the spirit *(ravān),* fantasy *(khayāl)* is as naught,
yet behold a world turning on a fantasy *(khayāl)!*
Rūmī, Maśnavī I:68–70, MJR2 p.8

See also: **jān**, **al-Mā' al-ma'īn** (3.1).

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1. *Qur'ān* 67:30.

robe, robe of glory, robe of light The soul's innate light and glory; also called its garment, raiment and so on. In early Middle Eastern literature, including Christian texts, the soul was commonly said to possess a robe or garment of glory, also called a wedding garment. It is conceived as a garment of light and love derived from the divine Essence. Descending to the lower realms and finally to this world, the soul was said to have lost its robe of glory. One of the most well known examples of its use is in an allegorical poem found in the *Acts of Thomas,* generally known as the *Robe of Glory* or the *Hymn of the Pearl.* The soul, symbolized as the son of a king, is sent into this world by his royal parents (God and the Word) to find the pearl of spirituality, guarded by the "loud-breathing" and unsleeping "serpent" of the mind. In the process, the soul loses its "bright robe" of glory and is clothed in increasingly dense coverings until it is covered by a garment of unyielding adamant, "which can crush iron"[1] – the physical body. The allegory is related by the soul in the first person:

And they (his parents) took off from me the bright robe,
  which in their love they had wrought for me,
And my purple toga,
  which was measured and woven to my stature.
And they made a compact with me,
  and wrote it in my heart,
  so that it should not be forgotten:
"If you go down into Egypt,
  and bring back thence the one pearl,
  which is in the midst of the sea
  hard by the loud-breathing serpent,
  then you shall again put on your bright robe
  and your toga, which is laid over it.
And with your Brother, our next in rank,
  you shall be heir in our kingdom."

Robe of Glory 9–15, Acts of Thomas IX; cf. AAA p.239, ANT pp.411–12, HS pp.12–13

So the soul, the prince, descends to this world, where it falls fast asleep, forgetting its quest. According to the parents' promise, the soul is therefore rescued by a Saviour (the "Brother"), and is gradually enabled once again first to see and then to put on its royal robe of glory, as it ascends through all the realms of light. The point on the inner journey where the soul knows itself to be a pure soul is portrayed as the soul seeing itself in its royal robe:

But I remembered not the brightness of it:
For I was yet a child and very young,
  when I had left it in the palace of my Father.

And suddenly, as I faced it,
the garment seemed to me like a mirror of myself.
I saw in it my whole self,
moreover I faced my whole self in facing it.
For we were two in distinction,
and yet again one in one likeness.
Robe of Glory 75–78, Acts of Thomas IX; cf. AAA p.243, ANT p.414, HS pp.24–27

Finally, when fully arrayed in the robe, the soul comes face to face with God, the Father:

And in its kingly motions
it was spreading itself out towards me;
And in the hands of its givers,
it hastened that I might take it.

And love urged me on,
that I should run to meet it and receive it;
And I stretched myself forth and received it,
with the beauty of its colours I adorned myself,
and in my royal robe excelling in beauty,
I arrayed myself, wholly.

And when I had clothed myself therewith,
I was lifted up to the gate of peace and homage;
And I bowed my head and worshipped
the Majesty of my Father who had sent it to me.
Robe of Glory 93–99, Acts of Thomas IX; cf. AAA p.244, ANT pp.414–15, HS pp.28–31

The garment, robe or raiment is one of the commonest metaphors in ancient Middle Eastern mystic literature. It is the meaning of the "wedding garment", for instance, in Jesus' parable of the wedding feast. The wedding feast symbolizes the union of the soul with the Lord, the divine King. But one man comes without his "garment" and is "cast … into outer darkness" – he has to be reborn in this world:

> And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. And he saith unto him, "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?", and he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
>
> *Matthew 22:11–13, KJV*

There are a number of allusions to this parable in early Christian texts, which reveal its meaning. In the *Acts of Thomas*, for example, Judas Thomas speaks of the "white raiment":

I was bidden to the supper and I came,
  and I refused the land and the yoke of oxen and the wife,
  that I might not for their sake be rejected.
I was bidden to the wedding,
  and I put on white raiment,
  that I might be worthy of it,
  and not be bound hand and foot,
  and cast into the outer darkness.

Acts of Thomas 146; cf. ANT pp.428–29

He also speaks of the "robes … that are eternal":

You stand in the temporal life,
  and the everlasting life you know not.
You are troubled by the marriage of corruption,
  and have not become aware of the true marriage.
You stand clad in robes that grow old,
  and long not for those that are eternal.
You are proud of this beauty which vanishes,
  and care not about the unsightliness of your (eternal) soul.
You are proud of (owning) a number of slaves,
  and your own soul from slavery you have not set free.

Acts of Thomas 135; cf. AAA p.269, ANT p.423, MAA p.232

Likewise, in the Nag Hammadi gnostic text, the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, the creative Power 'speaks' of the "robes" given to the soul when it enters the "perfect Light", and becomes "gloriously glorious":

I am inviting you into the exalted, perfect Light.
Moreover, (as for) this (Light), when you enter it,
  you will be glorified by those who give glory,
  and those who enthrone will enthrone you.
You will accept robes from those who give robes,
  and the Baptists (Masters) will baptize you,
  and you will become gloriously glorious,
  the way you first were when you were light.

Trimorphic Protennoia 45:12–20, NHS28 pp.422–33

The Mandaeans, too, used the metaphor extensively. In a passage where the "place" or "house of Life" is eternity, the soul is exhorted to wear the "garment of radiance":

Take, put on your garment of radiance,
  set on your living wreath!
Bow yourself and worship!
Prostrate (yourself within),
  and praise the Great Life (God).
Praise the place of Life to which your fathers go....
Good one (soul)! Rise to the house of Life,
  and go to the everlasting abode!

Mandaean Prayer Book 92; cf. CPM p.96

The Manichaean hymns also make frequent use of the term. One psalm, for instance, speaks of the "resplendent garment" of the souls in "paradise":

They go to the heaven of light
  where the gods dwell and are at peace.
They receive their (true) nature,
  the original splendour of the radiant palace,
  and are joyful.
They put on the resplendent garment,
  and live forever in paradise.

Manichaean Hymns, RMP bp; cf. GSR p.60:9.3, SPB p.915

In another psalm, the Saviour promises to lead the soul to the realms of light where it "shall put on a radiant garment and gird on light":

You shall rejoice in gladness, in blissful praises,
  you shall be without grief....
  and ... forgetful of wretchedness.
You shall put on a radiant garment and gird on light,
  and I shall set on your head the diadem of sovereignty.

Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān VIc:3–4; cf. MHCP pp.100–1

He will guide the soul to the "blessed abode", where it will be forever dressed "in pure raiment":

I shall set open before you the gates in all the heavens,
  and I shall make smooth your path,
  free from terror and vexation.
I shall take you with might, and enfold you with love,
  and lead you to your home, the blessed abode.

Forever shall I show to you the noble Father,
  I shall lead you in, into His presence, in pure raiment.
Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:66–68; cf. MHCP pp.150–53

In another psalm, the writer describes the peace and beauty of eternity, where the "garments" of the soul are not "made by hand":

They are happy in the Light and know no pain.
All who enter there, stay for eternity,
  neither blows nor torture ever come upon them.
The garments which they wear, none has made by hand.
[They are ever clean and bright;]
  nothing of the earth is in them
  (*lit.* no ants are in them).
Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān I:6–7, 18; cf. MHCP pp.66–69

Imagery associated with the soul's "garment" goes back far earlier in ancient Middle Eastern literature than the writings of early Christian times. It can even be found in Zoroastrian literature. The third-century Iranian mystic, Mānī, taught that Zarathushtra, whom the later Greeks called Zoroaster and who lived perhaps 1500 BCE, had also been a Saviour, a true Apostle – a divine Messenger sent by God to redeem those souls given into his care. Certainly, a study of Zarathushtra's *Gāthās* (poetry) reveals that the essential elements of the mystic path are present in his teachings.

Since Zoroastrianism was still a major religion in Iran and the surrounding areas in the time of Jesus and Mānī, it is understandable that Mānī and other mystics would have brought out the deeper meaning of Zarathushtra's teachings, which had been obscured by the processes of religion. As Mānī himself says in one of his works:

Earlier religions were (correct) as long as holy leaders were in them …, but once the leaders had ascended, their religions became confused.
Manichaean Text, MM2 p.295, RMP a; cf. GSR p.216, GVM p.40

Mystics use extant examples, parables, allegories, terms and expressions of past mystics that are in common use among the people to whom they are giving their teachings. A good example is the term *Vohu Manō,* often translated by scholars as 'Primal Mind', and used by Zarathushtra for the creative Power of God, the Word or *Logos.* Almost two thousand years later, it was used by Mānī with the same meaning as the later Middle Persian variant *Vahman. Vohu Manō* is described as the mediator who takes the soul to the "heavenly abodes", where it receives its "garment". Swedish scholar Geo Widengren comments:

> It is related in a passage in *Dātastān-i Dēnīk* (a Zoroastrian text) that the soul of the righteous man, accompanied by the Good Spirit *(Vohu Manō)* who is the 'companion of the soul' after death, ascends to the heavenly abodes and to the garment.... And having introduced the soul to *Ahurā Mazdā* (the supreme Lord), *Vohu Manō* shows it its throne and reward.
>
> *Geo Widengren, The Great Vohu Manah, GVM pp.49–50*

In the same Zoroastrian book, *Vohu Manō* itself is also likened to a seamless "garment":

> It is necessary that it is the healthy, white, pure, single (garment), made in one piece, just as *Vohu Manō* is in this manner the first single creature (created power). Consequently, it is from him *(Vohu Manō)* that ... the innermost and concealed garment has its appellation.
>
> *Dātastān-i Dēnīk 40:2; cf. GVM p.50*

Again, the Zoroastrian *Dēnkart* speaks of the soul's "light and white garment" which is of the same nature as the "garment" and "brilliance" of God:

> The light and white garment ...
> (which is) the very selfness of *Ormazd (Ahurā Mazdā),*
> His garment and His brilliance.
>
> *Dēnkart, CTPD p.204; cf. GVM p.50*

These passages indicate that the garment of the soul is one with the divine essence, the creative Power or *Vohu Manō,* and that this was understood by Zoroastrian mystical writers, although practically nothing at all is known about these writers in modern times.

Far later in time, the medieval *Zohar* is again explicit as to the nature of the soul's "garment", when interpreting the story of Moses and the burning bush in a mystical manner:

> The esoteric doctrine is that in the same way as the soul has to be clothed in a bodily garment in order to exist in this world, so is she given an ethereal supernal garment wherewith to exist in the other world, and to be enabled to gaze at the effulgence of life radiating from that 'land of the living'. Hence it is that Moses was not able to draw near to the place of God and to fix his gaze on what was to be seen there until he was first enveloped in another garment, as we read: "And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount," that is, he enveloped himself in the cloud, as in a garment,

> and then he "drew near into the thick darkness" where God was, and "was in the mount forty days and forty nights",[2] and was able to see what he did see. In similar fashion, the souls of the righteous in the other world clothe themselves in garments belonging to that world, so that they can endure to gaze on the light which is diffused in that 'land of the living'.
>
> *Zohar 1:66a, ZSS1 p.216, JCL*

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1. *Robe of Glory* 8, *Acts of Thomas* IX, *HS* pp.12–13.
2. *Exodus* 24:18.

ruaḥ (He) *Lit.* wind, breath, spirit; related to the word *reaḥ* (fragrance); the immortal spirit, a particle of the divine immanent power, the soul; one of the three biblical terms for soul or spirit, the other two being *nefesh* (breath, spirit, soul, mind) and *neshamah* (breath, spirit, immortal soul). In modern Hebrew, *ruaḥ* means wind and, metaphorically, the soul. In philosophical discussion, *ruaḥ* signifies the non-physical element in the world, as in the distinction between matter *(ḥomer)* and spirit *(ruaḥ).*

Genesis describes the beginning of the creation of the universe as the Spirit of God *(Ruaḥ Yahweh)* hovering on the face of the waters. Here, *ruaḥ* is the same term that is used for man's spirit or soul. It is God's Breath or Spirit that activates man. In biblical usage, it is sometimes used interchangeably with *nefesh:*

> O Lord, by these things men live,
> and in all these things is the life of my spirit *(ruaḥ);*
> So will You recover me, and make me live.
> Behold, for in peace I had great bitterness;
> But You have, in love to my soul *(nefesh),*
> saved it from the Pit of destruction;
> For you have cast all my sins behind your back.
>
> *Isaiah 38:16–17, JCL*

In *Ecclesiastes,* a part of the biblical Wisdom literature, the writer speaks of the fate of the body and the spirit *(ruaḥ)* at death:

> All go to one place:
> all are from the dust and all turn to dust again.
> Who knows whether the spirit *(ruaḥ)* of man goes upward,
> and the spirit *(ruaḥ)* of the beast goes downward to the earth?
>
> *Ecclesiastes 3:20, 21, JCL*

The *Midrash* (rabbinic commentary) discusses this passage in a discourse on the nature of the soul, using the term *neshamah* in place of *ruaḥ:*

> The *neshamah* (soul) fills the body, and when man sleeps it ascends and draws life for him from above.
>
> *Midrash Rabbah, Genesis 14:9, JCL*

The implication here is that when man is asleep, his *ruaḥ* replenishes and renews itself by contact with its source in the divine Spirit of God.

The Kabbalah describes three levels of soul. Here, *ruaḥ* is used to designate the soul's intermediate level. *Nefesh* is connected with the vital force as it is expressed through the body, and *neshamah* is the highest or most spiritual aspect. *Ruaḥ* conveys the essential spirituality of the *neshamah* to the level of *nefesh,* providing moral guidance to the individual:

> The *ruaḥ* is the power that enables the *nefesh* to maintain itself in the body, for the *nefesh* survives only because of the power of the *ruaḥ,* which acts like the breeze that blows. It is because of the *ruaḥ* that man is sustained by the power of the *nefesh,* for if the *ruaḥ* were withheld from the *nefesh,* this would bring death in its train, for the *nefesh* would not be able to maintain itself in the body.
>
> *Moses de León, Sefer ha-Nefesh ha-Ḥakhamah 1:3.1a–1b, in WZ2 p.686*

See also: **nefesh**, **neshamah**, **Ruaḥ ha-Kodesh** (3.1), **Ruaḥ Yahweh** (3.1), **rūḥ**.

rūḥ (A/P) (pl. *arwāḥ*) *Lit.* soul, spirit, breath, life; the Arabic word *rūḥ* is equivalent to the Persian word *jān* (spirit, life), although Persian writers such as Rūmī have commonly used both *jān* and *rūḥ*. Depending on the writer and the context, *rūḥ* is used for all levels of soul or spirit, but specifically for the highest level. The *rūḥ* is continuous with God Himself, for the *rūḥ* functioning in the individual is directly connected to the divine *Rūḥ,* which reflects the Lord's Command *(Amr):*

> When they ask you concerning the Spirit *(al-Rūḥ),* say:
> "The Spirit *(al-Rūḥ)* (comes) by the Command *(Amr)* of my Lord:
> But of the knowledge (thereof) only a little is given to you."
>
> *Qur'ān 17:85; cf. AYA, HQSA, MGK, QAL*

The *rūḥ,* within the individual person, may be called his essence or reality, compared to which the physical body and mental apparatus are 'less real' or 'less essential'. This is expressed figuratively in the *ḥadīth* (traditional saying):

> The Apostle said: "God created the spirits *(arwāḥ)* two thousand years before the bodies."
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV:11, KM p.263*

Nasafī goes on to explain the strange marriage of soul and body:

> Know that the human soul *(rūḥ)* is with the body by essence, and there is not a single particle of the body which the soul *(rūḥ)* does not accompany and which it does not encompass. Even so, the body remains at its own level and the soul *(rūḥ)* at its own level. The body cannot reach the level of the soul *(rūḥ)*. Additionally, even if any part of the physical body is removed, the soul *(rūḥ)* remains whole. Even if the body is cut to pieces, the soul *(rūḥ)* is untouched and remains unharmed.
>
> The soul *(rūḥ)* or the spirit is *with* the body, not *in* the body: it is not made part of the human form. There is a vast, important difference between these two states of being. The soul *(rūḥ)* is a fine and subtle energy, and the body is a coarse and dirty thing.
>
> *Nasafī, al-Insān al-Kāmil, Rasā'il-i Iżāfī 3:4, IK p.380*

Strange though this companionship of the soul and body may be, there is a divine purpose to it – so that the potential perfection of the spirit may be realized. Muḥammad Dārā Shikoh says:

> Know, O friend, that the reason why the essence of man has entered this framework of body (in other words, why the spirit incarnates at all) is that the seed of perfection, which lies in him latent, may become patent; that which is in the potentiality may reach the actuality, and may return enriched with all experiences to its original Source.
>
> *Muḥammad Dārā Shikoh, Risālah-i Ḥaqq Numā, COT p.1*

Rūḥ is contrasted with the lower human mind, the *nafs*. Rūmī, for instance, likens *'aql* (higher mind) and *rūḥ* to the legendary *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*, two angels who were punished by being put in a pit under Babylon, which symbolizes this world:

> Like *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*,
> those two pure ones (*'aql* and *rūḥ*)
> have been confined here in a horrible pit.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:620, MJR6 p.40*

It is said that the wicked learned magic from *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*, and then took from them the 'magic' of being able to rise to the heavens. Just so, the *nafs* has taken power from the *'aql* and *rūḥ,* and deprived them of the ability to rise above the material plane. In this world, the *'aql* must first learn to rule the *nafs*. Later on, the *'aql* is controlled by the *rūḥ*.

Typical of the fluidity of Sufi terminology, *rūḥ* is used in numerous expressions depicting a range of spirituality, just as *nafs* and *'aql* are used in a number of expressions denoting every stage of spiritual development from lowest to highest. According to Jurjānī in *Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt (Book of Definitions),* for example, there are three stages of *rūḥ:*

1. *Al-rūḥ al-insānīyah,* the human spirit; the immortal soul, given to man by God.
2. *Al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī,* the animal spirit; that which governs the bodily processes, common to both man and animals.
3. *Al-Rūḥ al-A'ẓam,* the Exalted Spirit, the Supreme Spirit of which the human spirit is a part and through which it is connected to the existence of God; also called *al-'Aql al-Awwal* (the First Intelligence), *al-Ḥaqīqah al-Muḥammadīyah* (the Reality of Muḥammad), *al-Nafs al-Wāḥidah* (the Single Essence), *al-Ḥaqīqah al-samāwīyah* (the celestial Reality), and by other similar names.[1]

Some of the other terms including *rūḥ* are:

Al-rūḥ al-nabātīyah, the vegetal spirit.
Al-rūḥ al-ṭabī'īyah, the natural spirit, equivalent to the animal Spirit.
Al-rūḥ al-suflá, the lower spirit, which belongs to animal life.
Al-rūḥ al-jārīyah, the travelling spirit, which leaves the body in sleep and gives rise to dreams.
Al-rūḥ al-muḥkamah, the resident spirit, which is described as never leaving the body, even after death.
Al-Rūḥ al-ilāhīyah, the divine Spirit, the Spirit of God.
Al-Rūḥ al-'ulwīyah, the lofty or heavenly Spirit, the Spirit of God.

See also: **'aql, ātman, hún, jān, ravān, ruaḥ, sirr**.

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[1] Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt, KT* p.76.

rūḥ al-'ayn, al- (A), **rūḥ-i 'ayn** (P) *Lit.* the essential *('ayn)* spirit *(rūḥ);* the human spirit; also called *al-rūḥ al-insānīyah* (the human spirit). Sufis describe a spiritual evolution from the vegetable, through the animal, and finally to the human state, each with its own form of spirit *(rūḥ).* In these contexts, *rūḥ* refers as much to the state of being in vegetable, animal and human life as to a separate spirit dwelling in each.

Although it is a significant step from the vegetal to the human condition, Rūmī says that this is very little compared to the difference between stages on the inner journey:

> Between every two resting places Yonder,
> there is a distance a hundred times as much as
> from the vegetal state to the essential spirit *(rūḥ-i 'ayn).*
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:806; cf. MJR6 p.50*

rūḥ al-ḥayawānī, al- (A), **rūḥ-i ḥayavānī** (P) *Lit.* the animal *(ḥayawānī)* spirit *(rūḥ);* the understanding and soul functioning in animals; sometimes used interchangeably with *rūḥ-i bād* (the airy spirit); the vital spirit on which animal sensation and perception depend; the animal 'spirit' and the 'spirit' within humans which deals with animal functions; the third of the four perceptible stages *(al-marātib al-maḥsūsah)* in the evolution of the soul, these being the mineral, vegetable, animal and human stages; sometimes contrasted with *jān-i rabbānī* (the divine spirit) or the *rūḥ-i insānī* (human spirit); also called *jān-i ḥayavānī* and *nafs-i ḥayavānī.*

In Sufi understanding, the *rūḥ-i ḥayavānī* is not an abstract concept, nor an attribute; it is a real substance *(jawhar)* or energy, a subtle body *(jism-i laṭīf).* According to Jurjānī in *Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt (Book of Definitions),* its seat is in the heart centre, near the physical heart, and it moves in the veins with the pulsations of the body.

Though subtle, it is connected with the four elements of the physical world which are active in all material beings: earth *(khāk),* water *(āb),* fire *(ātish)* and air *(bād).* In terms of traditional Islamic medicine, it is a product of and is affected by the *chahār ṭab',* the four natures of dryness, wetness, heat and cold.

In most people, the *rūḥ-i insānī* is dormant; the *rūḥ-i ḥayavānī* governs their lives. Generally, human beings cannot distinguish between the two, taking the *rūḥ-i ḥayavānī* to be the true human spirit, and believing they are living human lives. Using the Persian term, *jān,* Rūmī writes:

> Thereby they were sowing the seed of falsehood:
> for they deemed soul *(jān)* that which is not soul *(jān).*
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:525, MJR2 p.249*

In Sufi analysis, human beings have several spirits within themselves: the *rūḥ-i ḥayavānī,* functioning from the heart, governs sensation and perception, emotions, passions, physical health, sickness, etc. The spirit as it is in human beings, the *rūḥ-i insānī,* is possessed only by human beings. It comes from God Himself and is the key to the path towards union with Him. This divine soul or spirit is latent and potentially active in every human being.

See also: **al-marātib al-maḥsūsah** (6.3), **al-rūḥ al-insānīyah**, **al-rūḥ al-nabātīyah**, **rūḥ-i bād**.

rūḥ al-insānīyah, al- (A), **rūḥ-i insānī** (P) *Lit.* the spirit *(rūḥ)* of human-ness *(insānīyah);* the human spirit; the spirit which God breathed into Adam, according to *Genesis,* to make him a "living soul";[1] the spirit in man which comes directly from God. In some Sufi writings, the *rūḥ-i insānī* is distinguished from the *rūḥ-i ḥayavānī* (animal spirit). Being of God's own essence, it is one, as He is one. The *rūḥ-i ḥayavānī,* being a product of the four elements of the gross physical creation, is particular to an individual body. But the *rūḥ-i insānī* is single and indivisible, like the Breath from the divine Flutist blowing through many pipes, or like the light of the sun entering many houses:

The Sun, which is the spirits,
  became separated (into rays) in the windows,
  which are bodies.
When you gaze on the Sun's disc, it is itself one;
But he that is screened by bodies is in some doubt.
Separation is in the animal spirit *(rūḥ-i ḥayavānī);*
The human spirit *(rūḥ-i insānī)* is one essence.
Inasmuch as "God sprinkled His light upon them":[2]
  His light never really becomes separated.

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:186–89; cf. MJR2 p.231

Rūmī differentiates the *rūḥ-i ḥayavānī,* which can be affected by food and sleep and other conditions of physical life, from the *rūḥ-i insānī,* which comes directly from God and is independent of such variables:

It is higher than feminine and masculine:
This is not that spirit,
  which is composed of dryness and moisture.
This is not that spirit which is increased by (eating) bread,
  or which is sometimes like this and sometimes like that.
It is a doer of what is sweet, and it is sweet,
  and the essence of sweetness.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1976–78, MJR2 p.107

The appearance of individuality is only because the *rūḥ-i insānī* has entered separate bodies. For those who lead a life of the senses, the *rūḥ-i insānī* is overpowered by the *rūḥ-i ḥayavānī;* the *rūḥ-i insānī* remains dormant and powerless. Thus, the appearance of separateness between one individual and another, and between man and God, is convincing, since all perception is managed by the *rūḥ-i ḥayavānī.* The *rūḥ-i ḥayavānī* does not know, and has no way of knowing, the oneness of which the Saints speak. However, the Saints, who have developed the *rūḥ-i insānī,* are one in essence, indistinguishable in reality.

See also: **al-marātib al-maḥsūsah** (6.3), **al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī**, **al-rūḥ al-nabātīyah**.

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1. *Genesis* 2:7; *cf. Qur'ān* 15:29.
2. *Ḥadīth*, in *Maśnavī* II:189, *MJR2* p.231, *MJR7* p.67.

rūḥ al-nabātīyah, al- (A), **rūḥ-i nabātī** (P) *Lit.* the spirit *(rūḥ)* of vegetable-ness *(nabātīyah);* the vegetal spirit; also called *al-nafs al-nabātīyah;* the second of the four perceptible stages *(al-marātib al-maḥsūsah)* in the evolution of the soul, these being the mineral, vegetable, animal and human stages; the spirit as it functions in vegetal forms, traces of which still remain in both animals and humans. That is, with each forward step, the spirit of the former, less developed life form is not lost; only a new, more highly developed vehicle or spirit is added. The quickening and the vague longing which is felt by human beings and animals in spring comes from *rūḥ al-nabātīyah* within. Sufis teach that even human beings have to pass through these stages in the course of their spiritual evolution.

See also: **al-marātib al-maḥsūsah** (6.3), **al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī**, **al-rūḥ al-insānīyah**.

rūḥ al-nāṭiqah, al- (A), **rūḥ-i nāṭiqah** (P) *Lit.* the speaking or rational *(nāṭiqah)* spirit *(rūḥ);* the human or individual soul whose inner essence is the divine Spirit; essentially the same as *rūḥ al-insānīyah;* also called *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah.*

Nāṭiqah is the adjectival form of *nuṭq* (speech), which is used mystically for the Speech or Word of God. Terms such as *nāṭiqah* (speaking, possessing speech, rational) and *logos* (word, reason) have both mundane and spiritual meanings. But in a spiritual context, their meaning is not conveyed by a literal translation because words such as 'speaking', 'rational' and 'reason' do not convey the right sense. Expressions such as 'spiritual soul' and 'divine soul', though not literal translations, are better.

See also: **al-nafs al-nāṭiqah**.

rūḥ-i bād (P) *Lit.* airy *(bād)* spirit *(rūḥ);* the vital spirit; the spirit on which bodily functions and perceptions depend; regarded in Sufism as an animal function, shared by animals and humans; also called the *rūḥ-i ḥayavānī* or *jān-i ḥayavānī,* both meaning 'animal spirit', contrasted with *rūḥ-i insānī,* the divine soul as it can be experienced in human life.

The *rūḥ-i bād* is associated only with bodily living. As such, it cannot help the spirit towards an understanding of God. Rather, it can be an enemy to the soul that wishes to rise above physicality:

> Besides the understanding *(fahm)* and soul *(jān),*
> which is in the ox and the ass *(i.e rūḥ-i ḥayavānī),*
> man has another intelligence and soul *(i.e. rūḥ-i insānī);*
> Again, in the owner of that divine soul,
> there is another Soul (*i.e. Rūḥ-i Qudsī,* the Holy Spirit).
>
> The capacity to know (divine) oneness
> is not contained in the animal soul *(jān-i ḥayavānī);*
> Seek not this oneness
> from the airy vital spirit *(rūḥ-i bād).*
> If this (animal) one eats bread,
> that (divine) one is not filled;
> And if this (animal) one bears a load,
> that (divine) one does not become laden;
> Nay, but this (animal) one rejoices at the death of that (divine) one,
> and dies of envy when he sees that (divine) one prospering.

Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:409–13; cf. MJR4 pp.294–95

rūḥ-i vaḥy (P) *Lit.* spirit *(rūḥ)* of revelation *(vaḥy);* the spirit of prophecy, the spirit of divine inspiration, the divinely inspired spirit, the immortal soul; used by Rūmī in the *Maśnavī.* The *rūḥ-i vaḥy,* he explains, functions in a higher sphere than the *'aql* (higher mind, discriminating intelligence):

> The spirit of divine inspiration *(rūḥ-i vaḥy)*
> is more concealed than the *'aql,*
> because it is of the Unseen:
> It belongs to that side.
>
> The *'aql* of Aḥmad (Muḥammad)
> was not hidden from anyone,
> but his spirit of inspiration *(rūḥ-i vaḥy)*
> was not understood by every soul.
> The spirit of inspiration *(rūḥ-i vaḥy)*

also has actions conformable to itself,
but the *'aql* does not understand,
for that (spirit) is exalted (above the intellect).
Sometimes, he (the intellect) regards (the spirit) as madness;
Sometimes he is bewildered,
since it depends on his becoming that other one.

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:3258–61; cf. MJR2 pp.390–91

rūp(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* form, body, embodiment, corporeality; used in a variety of mystic contexts as, for example, *nar rūp* (the human form), *nūrī sarūp* (the light form of a Master) and *kāmarūpa,* meaning the desire body, the physical body, formed out of desire and in which desires are experienced; also, one of the five *skandhas* (factors) of Buddhist philosophy.

See also: **skandha**.

sabū (P) *Lit.* a pitcher, a ewer. Sufis have often likened the body to a pitcher holding an ocean. The spirit is an ocean, yet it is contained in a pitcher. 'Irāqī urges the spiritual seeker to break free of the narrow confines of the "pitcher":

Since you are a boundless sea,
I cannot comprehend
why you are continuously bound by a pitcher *(sabū).*

'Irāqī, Dīvān 4451, KHI p.303, in FNI1 p.106; cf. in SSE1 p.140

Similarly, Maghribī advises the seeker to "smash the pitcher". He reminds the struggling soul that he is the contents and not the pitcher, though it is the nature of an unenlightened person to identify with the body:

Smash the pitcher *(sabū)* –
you are the water in it, not the pitcher *(sabū);*
Put self aside –
you are an ocean, not the river.

Maghribī, in FNI1 p.106; cf. in SSE1 p.139

See also: **maṭkā**.

sachchidānand(a) (S/H) *Lit.* existence-consciousness-bliss *(sat + chit + ānanda);* truth-consciousness-bliss, truth-knowledge-bliss, being-knowledge-joy; where *sat* means pure Existence, mystic Truth or the highest Reality.

According to the Vedantic tradition, the essence of the soul is *sachchidānanda.* Whatever other differences there may be, this is generally accepted by almost all Indian traditions as the true nature of both the soul and God. God is the highest essence of Life and Reality; He is supreme felicity and blessedness.

Sachchidānanda refers to the indescribable *nirguṇa Brahman,* the absolute Reality. But, according to *Advaita Vedānta,* these are not so much the attributes of *Brahman* as *Brahman*'s essence. It is that which remains without change in the past, present and future. It is ever existent. It is beyond space and time; It is consciousness; It is in a constant state of bliss:

> Everything perceived or heard is nothing but *Brahman.* Attaining knowledge of Reality, see the universe as the one *Brahman,* existence-consciousness-bliss *(sachchidānanda).*
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 64*

The mystic Charaṇdās explains how to attain this blessed state:

> He who is engaged in repetition with his soul,
> he who has separated himself from the body,
> he who maintains silence –
> He merges with God who is existence-consciousness-bliss *(sachchidānanda).*
>
> *Charaṇdās, Bānī 1, Sumiran Vidhi 25, CDB1 p.32*

See also: **ānanda** (▸2), **chit**, **sat**.

sahasrār(a), sahasrār(a) chakr(a), sahasra dal(a) kamal(a) (S/H) *Lit.* wheel *(chakra)* with a thousand *(sahasra)* spokes *(arā);* the thousand-spoked wheel; the thousand *(sahasra)* -petalled *(dal)* lotus *(kamal);* a subtle centre described as an inverted lotus, its thousand petals pointing downwards.

Yogic texts say that it is reached after control of the *prāṇa* running through the six *chakras* of the body. During appropriate yogic practice, the attention rises up along the *sushumṇā,* the central *nāḍī* or current of *prāṇa* or life energy that runs along the spine linking the *chakras.* Reaching the top of the *sushumṇā,* the soul exits through the *Brahmarandhra,* a subtle opening in the crown of the head, and can then reach *sahasrāra,* which lies further in. It is described in the *Kaula Jñāna Nirṇaya* as a white lotus floating in the middle of an ocean of milk, at whose centre the Self resides.[1]

The actual location ascribed to the *sahasrāra* varies. The *Shiva Saṃhitā* places it at the *Brahmarandhra,* which it locates at the upper end of the *sushumṇā,* "at the root of the palate", a location which must be regarded as idiosyncratic.[2]

The *sahasrāra* is often described in Theosophical and later Western texts as the seventh bodily *chakra,* where it is also called the *sahasrāra Brahmarandhra.*[3] Basing this information on "Indian books", it is said to be located at the crown of the head:

> This centre, the seventh, situated at the top of the head, is somewhat different in construction from the other six. It is described in Indian books as the thousand-petalled lotus.... When fully alive, this *chakra* is perhaps the most resplendent of all, full of indescribable chromatic effects and vibrating with almost inconceivable rapidity.
>
> *A.E. Powell, The Etheric Double, EDP p.47; cf. IL p.199, TC pp.14–15, 96, 119*

It seems clear that the *sahasrāra* is the same as the *sahans dal kanwal* (thousand-petalled lotus) described by Indian Saints as the central powerhouse of the astral world. In this respect, the *sahasrāra* is not specifically a bodily *chakra,* since it is not dissolved along with the six bodily *chakras* at the time of death; nor is it directly associated with the running of bodily functions in the same way as the six *chakras.* It is, however, the centre from which all energies below, including the six *chakras,* have their source.

See also: **Brahmarandhra, sahans dal kanwal** (4.1).

1. *Kaula Jñāna Nirṇaya* 5:8.
2. *Shiva Saṃhitā* 5:103, 120*ff.*
3. A.E. Powell, *The Etheric Double, EDP* p.47.

sākshī (S/H) *Lit.* witness, observer.

See **jīvansākshī**.

samān(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* central *(sama)* breath *(ana);* the *prāṇa* associated with the *agni* or fire *tattva* and the navel or *maṇipūra chakra,* which "assimilates food and drink, and is located in the middle of the body".[1] It helps in digestion, assimilation and the balanced distribution of nourishment to all parts of the body. This *chakra* controls the body's larder, taking food in and out of storage as fats, carbohydrates and proteins as required.

See also: **chakra, maṇipūraka chakra, prāṇa, tattva**.

1. Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāra* 2:82.

sān pǎo (sān bǎo) (C) *Lit.* three *(sān)* treasures *(pǎo);* the three elements which combine in every human being to provide life, physical make-up, personality, intelligence and spiritual attributes. These are *chīng* (body essence), *ch'ì* (life force) and *shén* (spirit, consciousness).

See also: **ch'ì**, **chīng**, **shén**.

sarvaṃ khalvidaṃ Brahma (S) *Lit.* truly *(khalu),* all *(sarvaṃ)* this *(idaṃ)* (is) *Brahman (Brahma);* one of the sayings from the *Upanishads* considered to summarize their essential teachings, sometimes included as one of the four *mahāvākyas:*

> Truly, all this (universe) is *Brahman*
> *(sarvaṃ khalvidaṃ Brahma).*
> From it, all things originate,
> into it they dissolve and by it are they sustained.
> On it *(Brahman),* one should peacefully meditate.
>
> *Chhāndogya Upanishad 3:14.1*

See also: **mahāvākya**.

sekhel (He) *Lit.* intellect, intelligence; spirit; the adjective form is *sikhli* (intellectual, spiritual); commonly used to mean the spirit among medieval Jewish philosophers and Kabbalists:

> The *neshamah* is a matter of true intellect (*sekhel,* spirit). It is hewn from the source of life, and from the wellspring of intelligence and wisdom. Glory comes to dwell in the body in order to sustain everything for the service of the Creator, in order to pride him with substance.
>
> *Moses de León, Sefer ha-Nefesh ha-Ḥakhamah 1:3.1a–1b, in WZ2 p.686*

And:

> Prophecy is a mode of the intellect *('inyan sikhli).* It is the expression of the love of the Lord our God, the Lord is One.
>
> *Abraham Abulafia, Sefer ha-Ot, APP p.65, in SBJT p.72*

The use of terms translatable as 'intellect' and 'intelligence' where 'soul' or 'spirit' would be better renderings of the underlying meaning is common in Hebrew, Arabic, Greek and other languages. This can make translations confusing.

See also: **'aql, neshamah.**

shaḍ-dala-kamala (S) *Lit.* six *(shash)* -petalled *(kamala)* lotus *(dala);* the *svādhishṭhāna chakra,* the reproductive centre.

See also: **svādhishṭhāna chakra.**

sharīr(a) (S/H/Pu), **sarīr** (Pu) *Lit.* body; particularly, the physical *(sthūl),* subtle *(sūkshma)* and causal *(kāraṇa)* bodies or coverings, such bodies being both a means of expression of the mind within, as well as – in the wider sense – a part of the mind itself. A body, whether physical, astral or causal, reflects the characteristics of the mind within and is integrally linked with that mind. Bodies can also be described as vehicles for the existence or presence of the mind and soul in these realms. But the true self is none of these bodies:

> The self *(ātman)* that knows is neither born nor does it die.
> It has not sprung from anything,
> and nothing has sprung from it.
> Birthless, eternal, imperishable and ancient,
> it is not harmed even when the body *(sharīra)* dies.
>
> *Kaṭha Upanishad 1:2.18*

Even so, mystics speak of the value of the human body as a stepping stone on the path to God:

> This body *(sarīr)* is the Lord's mansion (*Hari mandar,* temple of God)
> wherein is revealed the jewel of divine comprehension.
> The egocentrics (*manmukh,* followers of the mind) know not at all,
> and say that within the mortal
> is not the God's mansion *(Hari mandar).*
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1346, MMS*

But they also point out that – for the majority of people – the body is the source of egotism and illusion *(māyā):*

> This body *(sarīr)* is a puppet of *māyā:*
> in it is infused the evil ego.
> In coming and going, birth and death,
> an apostate (*manmukh,* follower of the mind) loses honour.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 31, MMS*

See also: **kāraṇa sharīra**, **kāyā**, **nar deh**, **nar nārāyaṇī deh**, **sthūla sharīra**, **sūkshma sharīra**, **tan**.

shèng t'āi (shèng tāi) *Lit.* sacred *(shèng)* embryo *(t'āi)*. Some schools of Taoism believe in the existence of a spiritual embryo that can be cultivated within a human being through the conservation and concentration of one's energies *(ch'ì)* and body essences *(chīng)*. Through the practice of various physical austerities and meditation, *shèng t'āi* can eventually grow to become an immortal soul which, if mature at the time of death, transforms the practitioner into an Immortal or *Hsiēn*.

See also: **ch'ì**, **chīng**.

shén (shén) (C) *Lit.* deity, deities, spirit. In religious Taoism, *shén* are deities and spirit entities. *Shén* is also understood among Taoists as spiritual vitality, expressed within the individual being as soul *(líng hún)*, the power which activates consciousness. It is believed that *shén* combines with *chīng* (bodily essence) and *ch'ì* (breath, life force) at the conception of a human being, giving form and life. These three are referred to as the three treasures *(sān pǎo)*. At the moment of death, when *chīng* and/or *ch'ì* have been totally depleted through waste, illness or deterioration, *shén* leaves the body. Therefore, the Taoist makes efforts to preserve *chīng* and *ch'ì* through various physical and spiritual exercises in order to extend and enhance life. In common Chinese parlance, a person is said to be devoid of *shén* when they feel illness or lack of energy. Conversely, someone who is full of energy and enthusiasm is said to possess an abundance of *shén*.

This consciousness or *shén* is divided into two general categories: *shíh shén* which represents ordinary or physical consciousness, perceived entirely though the mind and senses; and *yüén shén* which represents spiritual, primal or higher consciousness.

At the time of birth, ordinary consciousness or *shíh shén* becomes manifest, with the result that only worldly thoughts, feelings and emotions are experienced. One who endeavours to come into conscious awareness of *Tào*, by means of spiritual practices and self-purification, gradually breaks out of the bonds of this ordinary consciousness into spiritual or primal consciousness, *yüén shén*.

Shíh shén can be positively or negatively influenced or expressed. Taoists therefore believe it to be important to nourish one's self by meditation, by avoiding negative influences and substances, and by exposure to positive and uplifting environments. In order to keep tranquil and serene, a watch is kept on the thoughts and emotions to avoid dissipation of mental and emotional energies.

See also: **ch'ì**, **chīng**, **hsīn**, **líng hún**.

shíh shén (shí shén) (C) *Lit.* worldly *(shíh)* spirit *(shén);* material consciousness. The coarse aspect of consciousness associated with thoughts, feeling and emotions *(hsīn),* and experienced entirely though the mind and senses. The more subtle aspect of consciousness is *yüén shén,* which represents spiritual, primal or higher consciousness.

At the time of birth, ordinary consciousness or *shíh shén* begins to dominate, with the result that only worldly thoughts, feelings and emotions can be perceived.

See also: **hsīn**, **shén**.

shipmaster The captain or master of a ship; hence, the soul which – according to allied imagery – is to set sail for its eternal home in a ship of light. The expression is found, for instance, among the hymns attributed to Ephraim Syrus, where, in mixed imagery, the soul has steered its ship of light, its "glorious tree", into the "harbour" of eternity. Or perhaps the "skilful shipmaster" is Jesus, on board whose ship the soul has sailed into the "harbour of Life":

> O skilful shipmaster,
>   you who have conquered the raging sea,
>   your glorious tree has come to the harbour of Life....
> Blessed be he who has been a shipmaster for his soul,
>   who has discovered and preserved his treasure.
>
> *Ephraim Syrus, ESHS4 601:15; cf. MEM p.98*

The soul as a "tree", watered by the Living Water, is a metaphor found in some of the ancient literature of the Middle East. In this context, the ship is also referred to as a "tree" possibly because, in those days, ships were made of wood. Or, if the "skilful shipmaster" is Jesus, his "glorious tree" would be the Tree of Life, the divine Word which carries souls across the "raging sea" of this world.

Similar imagery, especially with the Saviour as the Shipmaster or Helmsman, is also found in some gnostic and Manichaean texts.

See also: **harbour** (2.1), **Helmsman** (▸2), **storm** (6.2), **trees**.

shuk(a) (S/H) *Lit.* parrot; mystically, the free and immortal soul, often portrayed as caged in a mortal body.

See also: **bird**.

shvās(a) (S/H), **svās** (H/Pu) *Lit.* breath; an Indian measurement of the passage of life, and the passage of time. It is commonly said, for instance, that the number of breaths allotted to each individual is predetermined, and that they should be spent well. Kabīr says:

> Fruitful is the breath *(svās)*
> that is spent in the remembrance of God.
> All other breaths *(svās)* are spent in vain,
> in countless, diverse ways.
>
> What reliance can be placed on the body *(deh)?* –
> in a moment, it may wither and die.
> Remember the Lord with your every breath *(svās-svās):*
> there is no other remedy.
>
> *Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Sumiran 54–55, KSS p.91*

silver cord An expression appearing in the biblical book of *Ecclesiastes,* which has been taken to refer to the 'thread' of life energies that connects the soul and higher mind to the body. When the soul leaves the body before the end of physical life, during out-of-the-body experiences, the connection is said to be maintained by means of the silver cord. The meaning is metaphorical, rather than literal, referring to the connection of the soul to the body that maintains normal life functions during such experiences, whether in this or higher worlds.

At the time of death, the "silver cord" connecting the soul to the body is "loosed". The expression occurs in a passage in which the writer is speaking of death, using a number of metaphors to depict the transitory nature of life:

> Remember your Creator now, in the days of your youth,
> before bad days come,
> and the years draw near of which you will say,
> "I have no pleasure in them." …
> Because man goes to his long home,
> and the mourners go about the streets:
> Before the silver cord be loosed,
> or the golden bowl be broken,
> or the pitcher be broken at the fountain,
> or the pulley wheel broken at the water cistern.

> Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was:
>   and the spirit (*lit.* breath) shall return
>   to God who gave it.
>
> *Ecclesiastes 12:1, 5–7; cf. KJV, JCL*

See also: **maṭkā**, **patang**, **sabū**.

sirr (A/P) *Lit.* secret, mystery; also, hidden, veiled, esoteric; a Sufi term for the spiritual centre of an individual's being; the innermost part of the spiritual heart, the innermost consciousness, innermost ground of the spirit:

> *Sirr* is the quintessence of man, which he keeps secretly with God. The tongue can never describe it nor can man narrate it.
>
> *Anṣārī, Ṣad Maydān, in FN19 p.118*

> *Sirr* is *ma'ná* (spirit) within, which is hidden from comprehension by the senses.
>
> *Al-Qāshānī, Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Ṣūfīyah, in FLI p.462*

In mystic terminology, each level of consciousness that is higher and purer is also more real, closer to God; it is also said to be more hidden or further 'inward'. In Sufi psychology, the *sirr* is higher, more inward, more hidden than the *rūḥ* or *jān* (spirit), which is similarly higher and more hidden than the *qalb* or *dil* (spiritual heart), which is higher than the *jism* (body). Thus, Hujwīrī explains 'Amr ibn 'Uthmān al-Makkī's observations on the hierarchical character of man's constitution:

> He (God) imprisoned the secret spirit *(sirr)* in the spirit *(jān)* and the *jān* in the soul *(dil)* and the *dil* in the body; then He mingled reason *('aql)* with them, and sent prophets and gave commands; then each of them began to seek its original station.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIX; cf. KM p.309*

In man's present condition, the *sirr* is imprisoned in the *jān* or *rūḥ* which is imprisoned in the *dil* or *qalb,* and once it is so imprisoned, it is mingled with *'aql* (the higher mind). Being thus imprisoned and mingled with the mind, it is then further imprisoned in the *jism* (the body of coarse physical matter).

The purpose of spiritual practice is to focus the attention at the *dil* (the spiritual heart) where the *jān* is imprisoned within the body. It is at this point that the spirit leaves the body, whether in natural death *(mawt iḍṭirārī)* or in mystical death *(mawt ikhtiyārī);* in this way the individual is released from the first imprisonment, the imprisonment in the body. As spiritual practice continues, the *jān* leaves the *dil* behind. Ultimately, the *sirr* – the innermost essence of being of which a person normally has no inkling – is released from imprisonment in the *jān*. Hujwīrī uses *sirr* in this sense when he writes:

> Therefore, contemplation in this world resembles the vision of God in the next world.... Contemplation is an attribute of the heart *(sirr)*, and cannot be expressed by the tongue except metaphorically.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXII; cf. KM p.332–33*

Like practically all such Sufi terms, different writers have used them in different ways at different times. Definitions can therefore rarely be definitive or precise. Rūmī, for example, does not seem to adhere to the above system, while the *Naqshbandīyah* order call a certain point on the chest the *sirr*, and practise *źikr-i sirr* with the attention focused at this point. On the other hand, other *faqīrs* use the term *źikr-i sirr* for a form of *źikr* (repetition) which is only revealed within, when the spirit has ascended into the subtle realms.

Sirr has also been used by Sufis in a variety of contexts and compound expressions, such as *gūsh-i sirr* (inner ear), *sirr-i ʻilm* (esoteric knowledge), *sirr-i Ḥaqīqat* (hidden Reality), and so on. Also, while *sirr* is the innermost consciousness, *sirr-i sirr* is used for the ultimate innermost consciousness in which the secrets of God become known.

See also: **rūḥ**.

skandha (S/H) *Lit.* aggregate, collection, group, compound; according to Buddhism, a human being is comprised of an aggregate or collection of five factors, the *pañcha-skandhas.* These are: body or corporeality *(rūpa)*, feelings *(vedanā)*, perceptions *(sañjñā)*, predispositions due to mental impressions *(sanskāras)* of the past, and consciousness *(vijñāna)*. These factors comprise what a human being mistakenly regards as his or her identity. As long as they remain together as a functional whole, the individual sees him or herself as a single being, even though each part is in continual flux, whether of body or mind. At death, this aggregate is dissolved, and its component *skandhas* disperse. However, the net result of the individual's experiences remains, forming the basis for the next life as the result of past thought and action.

According to Jain metaphysics, the physical universe is comprised of atoms. *Skandhas* are formed from the combination of two or more of these atoms.

See also: **rūpa**, **sanskāra** (6.3), **vijñāna**.

solah dal kamal (H), **shoḍasha-dala-kamala** (S) *Lit.* sixteen *(solah, shoḍasha)* -petalled *(dal)* lotus *(kanwal);* the throat or *kaṇṭha chakra.*

See also: **solah dal kamal** (4.1), **vishuddha chakra**.

son of God The soul; specifically, the soul in a human form; an expression used in Judaism, Christianity and in the ancient Middle East for the soul. In Christianity, the Son of God refers to Jesus, a term that especially in early Christianity was understood to mean the *Logos.*

Since God was known as the Father of all, the soul – as a drop of His Being – is naturally His son. As it says in John's gospel, concerning John the Baptist:

> As many as received him,
> to them gave he power to become the sons of God.
> *John 1:12, KJV*

Through the "power" of a mystic, souls are enabled to realize their true nature as "sons of God". The gospel writer was alluding to the teachings of Moses, who is credited in *Deuteronomy* with the saying, "Ye are the children of your Lord God,"[1] which in the Greek Septuagint translation reads, "Ye are the sons of the Lord your God." Moses also asks, "Is not He thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath He not made thee, and established thee?"[2] And challenging them, he also says:

> Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful,
> and hast forgotten God that formed thee.
> *Deuteronomy 32:18, KJV*

This is an admonition which is applicable to most souls in this world. All souls have the potential to become realized sons of God, though most do not attempt to realize that potential.

The Alexandrian Greek-speaking Jew, Philo Judaeus, contemporary with Jesus, points out that Moses commonly referred to God as the Father and to mankind as His sons. But he adds that only one who has experienced God's Wisdom is truly a son of God, while others should strive for that estate through the helping power of the *Logos:*

> They who have attained wisdom, are, as they should be, called sons of the one God, as Moses also acknowledges when he says: "You are the sons of the Lord God,"[3] and "God who begat you,"[4] and "Is not He Himself your Father?"[5] …

> And if a man should not be worthy to be called a son of God, let him strive manfully to take his place under God's First-born, the *Logos,* the eldest of the angels, who is as it were their chief. And many names are his; for he is called Beginning *(Archē),* and Name of God, and *Logos* and the Man-after-the-Likeness.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On the Confusion of Tongues 28; cf. PCW4 pp.88–91, TGH1 p.233*

See also: **Only-begotten Son** (3.1).

1. *Deuteronomy* 14:1.
2. *Deuteronomy* 32:6.
3. *Deuteronomy* 14:1.
4. *Deuteronomy* 32:18.
5. *Deuteronomy* 32:6.

soul Used to mean many things throughout the ages and in the translation of a number of different terms from other languages. In philosophical or psychological terms, the soul is the spirit or immaterial part of man. It is thus considered to be the seat of human personality, intellect, will, emotions and so on. It is also regarded as an entity that survives bodily death. In Christianity, the soul is the spiritual part of a person, capable of redemption from sin through the power of divine grace.

Mystically, the soul refers to the essential part of man, the drop of pure being that has its source in God Himself, the drop of His ocean, the ray of His sun, the spark from His fire. This also means that the soul has the same characteristics as God Himself. It is immortal and cannot be destroyed.

In Judaism, Sufism, Greek mysticism and often in Christianity too, the terms for soul were commonly used in a general way for all aspects of man's inner being, not always for his immortal spark of divinity. Consequently, mystics have spoken of the animal soul, the higher soul and so on. Judaism and Sufism in particular both describe many parts to the 'soul' of man. While the specific meaning can usually be determined from the context, this is not always so. Consequently, some care is required when interpreting mystic writings of the past, especially when looking only at translations. John of the Cross, for example, speaks of the "sensual part of the soul" and the "spiritual part":

> Sometimes he (the devil) stirs up many motions in the sensual part of the soul, … and causes other vexations, both spiritual and sensual, from which it is not in the power of the soul to free herself until the Lord sends His angel (as said in the psalm[1]) round about them that fear Him, and delivers them. And makes peace and tranquillity alike in the sensual part of the soul and in the spiritual part.
>
> *John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle XVI:2, CWJC2 p.263*

However, it is the divine, immortal spark or essence of life and consciousness to which Jesus is referring in the *Gospel of Thomas*, when he says:

> That which you have will save you,
> if you bring it forth from yourselves.
> That which you do not have within you will kill you,
> if you do not have it within you.
>
> *Gospel of Thomas 45:70, NHS20 pp.80–81*

Ultimately, all that a person really 'has' is his own soul. Everything else is external to that. If that is manifested or brought forth, then it will lead to salvation. If it is not realized within, then the result will be death in the sense of repeated birth in this world where repeated physical death is the only sure outcome.

The idea of God dwelling within the soul is one of the characteristic features of all mysticism. The idea was common among the Greek mystics from long before the Christian era until the last flourishing of Greek mystical thought in the third and fourth centuries CE, among the Neo-Platonists such as Plotinus. Numerous examples could be given. Among the Pythagorean literature of early Christian times are found:

> God has not upon earth a place more fit for Him to dwell
> than in a pure soul.
>
> *Pythagorean Saying, in Golden Verses of Pythagoras 1, HVP p.9*

And:

> I dwell with less pleasure in the resplendent heavens
> than in the souls of men.
>
> *Oracle of Apollo, in Golden Verses of Pythagoras 1, HVP p.9*

And, addressing an issue which is still debated – whether life and being comes from the body, or the soul provides the body with life:

> The immaterial body (soul) is the (source of) life,
> and produces the life of the material body.
>
> *Hieroclēs, Golden Verses of Pythagoras 67–69, HVP p.122*

Plotinus describes the soul in the body as a "stranger looking upon a strange world",[2] also speaking of the "separation of the soul from a body to which it is essentially a stranger".[3] He also says that because the soul is a part of God, it has a natural love and affinity for Him:

> Since the soul is different (separate) from God, but is derived from Him, she necessarily loves him, and when she is there (in the spiritual world), she has a celestial love; but the love which she here possesses is common and vulgar....
>
> In the spiritual world, the true object of love is to be found, with which we may be conjoined (merged), in which we may participate and truly possess, and which is not externally enveloped with flesh. He, however, who knows this, will know what I am saying, and will be convinced that the soul has then another life.
>
> *Plotinus, Enneads 6:9.9, SWP pp.317–18*

In the Hermetic writings of the same era, the author says that just as one man exercises multiple faculties simultaneously, and yet remains one person, so too does God administer all things at the same time, providing "life" and "soul" and all else, and yet remains One:

> All things, therefore, He makes, in many (ways). And what great thing is it for God to make life, soul, and deathlessness, and change, when you (yourself) do so many things?
>
> For do you not see, and speak, and hear, and smell, and taste, and touch, and walk, and think, and breathe? It is not one man who smells, a second one who speaks, a third who touches, another one who smells, another one who walks, another one who thinks, and (yet) another one who breathes. But one is he who does all these.
>
> And yet no one of these could be apart from God. For just as, should you cease from these, you would no longer be a living thing, so also, should God cease from them (a thing not law to say), no longer is He God.
>
> *Corpus Hermeticum XI:12; cf. TGH2 pp.182–83*

The enigmatic Heraclitus (*c.*535–475 BCE), writing nearly a thousand years earlier, had the same things to say about the soul and the nature of man:

> You could not discover the limits of soul,
> even if you travelled every road to do so;
> Such is the depth of its meaning.
>
> Soul is the breath (essence)
> out of which everything else is derived;
> Moreover it is the least corporeal of things.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragments 42–43; cf. HPW p.58*
>
> Human nature has no real understanding:
> only the divine nature (the soul) has it.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 61, HPW p.68*

And referring to the common tendency of human beings to turn away from their own inner spiritual essence:

> How can anyone hide from that which never sets?
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 73, HPW p.68*

See also: **ātman**, **ḥayyah**, **hún**, **jān**, **ñe'eng**, **nefesh**, **neshamah**, **ravān**, **ruaḥ**, **rūḥ**, **spirit**, **surat**, **yeḥidah**.

1. *Psalm* 34:7.
2. Plotinus, *Enneads* 3:8.6.
3. Plotinus, *Enneads* 3:6.5.

spirit The force or principle of life which animates the bodies of living things; a term somewhat loosely used in a wide variety of contexts, both mundane, psychic and mystical. People speak of the spirit of something, as opposed to its literal meaning, like the spirit of the law; souls from the astral world or even ghosts are known as spirits; the term is also used synonymously for the soul, and also for the Word, where it is commonly called the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost. The centre ground in all these meanings is something which is at the same time the essence as well as subtle and unseen.

Mystics say that it is the soul or spirit which gives life to a body. Hence, in the *Gospel of Thomas,* Jesus said:

> If the flesh came into being because of spirit,
> it is a wonder.
> But if spirit came into being because of the body,
> it is a wonder of wonders.
> Indeed, I am amazed at how this great wealth
> has made its home in this poverty.
>
> *Gospel of Thomas 38–39:29, NHS20 pp.66–67*

Addressing an issue which has always been a source of debate, Jesus says that life processes, which come into being because of the spirit within, are remarkable – "a wonder". But if it be thought that the spirit, consciousness or life comes into existence through the ramifications of material activity in the body, as materialists believe, then that would be even more of a wonder. In fact, he says that it is amazing how the pure spirit or soul, a drop of God Himself, the spiritual wealth within, "has made its home in this poverty" – in the body. It is remarkable that the princely soul, rich beyond comparison, should have taken to living like a pauper in the spiritually impoverished material universe, as if that were its home.

See also: **ātman**, **ḥayyah**, **jān**, **nefesh**, **neshamah**, **ravān**, **ruaḥ**, **rūḥ**, **soul**, **surat**, **yeḥidah**.

sthūl(a) sharīr(a) (S/H), **sthūl deh** (H) *Lit.* gross physical *(sthūl)* body *(deh, sharīra)* used as a vehicle for the mind and soul on the physical plane; the body which is discarded at death, as contrasted with the *sūkshma sharīra* (subtle body) and the *kāraṇa sharīra* (causal body) which survive bodily death. *Sthūl* means great, large, bulky, fat, corpulent; unwieldy, gross, dense, coarse, rough; clumsy, dull, stupid; material, materialized, physical.

Although designated gross, since it is made out of gross material substance, the physical body is exceptionally complex in construction and ultradynamic in its internal activity. A present-day German scientist, Fritz Albert Popp, has estimated that every cell in some cucumber seedlings he was studying was subject to in excess of 100,000 intermolecular reactions per cell per second. And each cell is functionally integrated and coordinated with the other billions of cells in the body.

The physical body has both gross and subtle aspects, the latter comprising the *chakras, prāṇas, nāḍīs* and so on – a subtle web or blueprint of subtle life energies which activates and maintains dynamic function of the gross, externally manifested body for as long as life continues. Behind all this is the mind, and behind the mind is the soul. It is the soul and mind which give rise to the external appearance of life on the physical plane. And as soon as the soul and mind reach the end of their allotted *prārabdh* (fate) *karma,* they leave the body. The intense and ceaseless activity and organization of material substance which characterize biological life are then terminated. The activity ceases, reverting rapidly to that which is characteristic of inert substance, and the organization of the body into cellular and other systems immediately begins to disintegrate.

A physical body is a projection of the mind within. The life form or kind of body into which a soul and mind are projected – together with their associated *prārabdh karma* – are a precise reflection of the mind within. The physical body is thus a crystallization or a part of the workings of the greater mind which runs not only the physical realm, but the astral and causal universes as well.

sūhaṭ (Pu) *Lit.* parrot; figuratively, the soul, often portrayed as caged in the body.

See also: **bird**.

sūkshma man (H) *Lit.* subtle *(sūkshma)* mind *(man);* the astral mind; the mind associated with the astral body *(sūkshma sharīra),* which functions in the astral region; also called the *aṇḍī man.*

See also: **aṇḍī man**.

sūkshma sarūp (H) *Lit.* subtle *(sūkshma)* form *(sarūp);* the astral body.

See also: **sūkshma sharīra**.

sūkshma sharīr(a), sūkshma ang(a) (S/H) *Lit.* subtle *(sūkshma)* body *(sharīra, ang);* used in the *Upanishads* and Vedantic philosophy; also called the *linga* (subtle) *sharīra.* In the *Ātmabodha,* Shankara says that the *sūkshma anga* consists of the *prāṇas* (life energies), *indriyas* (mental faculties of perception and action), the *manas* (mind energy), and the *buddhi* (reasoning faculty), which are themselves formed from the subtle undifferentiated forms of the five *tattvas* or *bhūtas* (elemental conditions of matter):

> The subtle body *(sūkshma anga),* the instrument of the soul's experience, consists of the five *prāṇas,* the ten organs *(indriyas),* the *manas* and the *buddhi* – all formed from the fundamental elements *(bhūtas)* before their fivefold subdivision and recombination with one another.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 13*

At death, the *prāṇas* are withdrawn from the body, and the *manas* and *buddhi,* though concerned with physical living, remain a part of the mind which survives bodily death. The *Upanishads* also describe the *prāṇas,* the *manas* and the *buddhi* as three sheaths or *koshas* around the soul. Hence, Swāmī Nikhilānanda observes:

> These three sheaths *(koshas)* together constitute the subtle body *(sūkshma sharīra),* which, after death, accompanies the soul in its transmigration.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS p.73*

According to Indian mysticism, the gross physical body has its subtle aspects, such as the *prāṇas,* the subtle aspects of the five *tattvas,* the ten *indriyas,* and so on. These are dissolved along with the physical body. Some commentators have called this subtle part of the physical body, the etheric body. But mystics say that there is also an astral body with its associated mind, for functioning in *sahans dal kanwal* or the true astral realm. There is also a causal body and a causal mind through which the soul functions in *trikuṭī* or the true causal realm.

Perception through the *sūkshma sharīra* or astral body is far more immediate and more obviously associated with the content of the observer's astral mind than is the case in the physical universe between the physical mind and external physical experience. In fact, the astral mind and the perception of astral scenes are very closely intertwined, as they are in dreams, for instance. The true astral body or *sūkshma sharīra* is thus the blueprint of which the physical *indriyas* and other aspects of the physical body are comprised.

The *sūkshma sharīra* or astral body is much lighter and finer than the physical body. Every person possesses and uses an astral body, here and now, although he may be unconscious of it. It is through and by means of this finer body that the mind and soul are able to make contact with the physical body and the outside world. This finer body takes on a shape and colours in harmony with the character of the individual. On the plane where the astral body functions, no deception is possible. Everyone is seen just as he is. This astral body has its five senses just the same as the physical body. When the physical body dies, this finer body remains as the instrument of expression upon that higher plane of life. But it is more subtle than the subtle aspects of the physical frame.

See also: **astral body**.

ṣūrah al-mithālīyah (A), **ṣūrat-i miśālī** (P) *Lit.* pattern *(mithālīyah)* form *(ṣūrah); mithālīyah* (*lit.* pattern-ness) is the abstract noun formed from *mithāl* (pattern); the form in the *'ālam al-mithāl* (world of patterns), of which this visible world is a reflection; an immaterial or subtle body *(jism-i laṭīf),* with limbs corresponding to those of the physical body. According to Sufis, the limbs of the physical body are garments, vehicles or tools of the *ṣūrah al-mithālīyah.*

See also: **'ālam al-mithāl** (4.1), **sūkshma sharīra**.

surat (H/Pu) *Lit.* remembrance, recollection, memory; attention, consciousness; used by Indian mystics for the eternal essence of man, the soul, which is a drop of the Supreme, and also for the soul's power to hear the divine Sound within; of uncertain derivation, probably from *shruti* (hearing, the ear), since soul, attention, consciousness and memory are all related to the faculty of inner hearing. The common Hindi term for the soul is *ātmā* or *ātman. Surat* has been used by a few mystics, like Kabīr and Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, and also appears in the *Ādi Granth:*

> Listen to me, O soul *(surat):*
> your Lord dwells in the skies above.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 19:6.1, SBP p.145*

God Himself is the Word *(Shabd),*
and Himself the understanding (*surat,* soul),
which is tuned to its Music (*Dhun,* Melody).

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 165, MMS

There is the same inner consciousness *(surat)* amongst all the beings:
without inner consciousness *(surat),* He has created none.
As is the consciousness *(surat),* so is their way.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 24–25, MMS

See also: **ātman**, **ḥayyah**, **jān**, **nefesh**, **neshamah**, **ruaḥ**, **rūḥ**, **soul**, **spirit**, **yeḥidah**.

svādhishṭhān(a) chakra (S/H) *Lit. svādhishṭhāna* centre *(chakra);* the genital *chakra* or centre; the six-petalled *chakra* situated on a level with the reproductive organs; a reflection of the corresponding six-petalled centre in the higher realm of *aṇḍa* which is responsible for the higher functions of birth and death, growth and decay, and so on; also called the *linga* (phallus) *chakra,* the *indrī* (sex organ, *lit.* organ) *chakra,* and the *khaṭ dal kamal* or *shaḍ-dala-kamala* (six-petalled lotus).

The term *svādhishṭhāna* is of uncertain derivation; some derive it from *sva* (own) + *adhishṭhāna* (base), others from *svādh* (to taste well, to enjoy). The deity of the *svādhishṭhāna chakra* is said in some texts to be *Brahmā,* the creator-deity representing the creative *rajoguṇa,* the *guṇa* (attribute) active at this centre. Other texts have *Vishṇu* as the deity. The *tattva* administered at this centre is that of *jala* or water. In Hindu symbolism, *Brahmā* is portrayed as seated on a white *makara,* a mythical water creature, having the head and forelegs of a deer and the tail of a fish, sometimes mistakenly depicted like a crocodile, possibly symbolizing the water *tattva.*

The *Shiva Saṃhitā* says:

> The second *chakra* is situated at the base of the (sex) organ. It has six petals designated by the letters *ba, bha, ma, ya, ra, la.* Its stalk is called *svādhishṭhāna,* the colour of the lotus is blood red; its presiding adept is called *Bāla,* and its goddess, *Rākiṇī.*
>
> He who contemplates daily on this *svādhishṭhāna* lotus becomes an object of love and adoration to all beautiful goddesses.
>
> He confidently expounds the various *Shāstras* and sciences previously unknown to him, becomes free from all diseases, and moves fearlessly throughout the universe.
>
> Death is consumed by him, he is consumed by none; he obtains the highest psychic powers such as *aṇimā, laghimā* and so on. *Vāyu* (air,

> *i.e. prāṇa*) moves evenly throughout his body; the humours of his body are also increased; the ambrosia welling forth from the eternal lotus also increases in him.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 5:75–78; cf. SSV pp.65–66*

The *svādhishṭhāna chakra* is the subtle administrator of the procreative aspects of man's physical being, and the pranic energy associated with the *svādhishṭhāna chakra* is known as *vyāna*. Blood, urine, lymph, semen and the other bodily fluids are also a part of outward manifestation of the energy field of the *jala tattva* and its associated pranic energy. The gonadal endocrine glands are also an aspect of its outer, physical expression.

See also: **chakra**, **prāṇa**, **tattva**.

ṭabī'ah al-basharīyah, al- (A), **ṭabī'at-i basharī** (P) *Lit.* the essence *(ṭabī'ah)* of human nature *(basharīyah);* carnal nature; that aspect of human nature which is rooted in the senses, as opposed to *insānīyah* (also translated as 'human nature') which implies the spiritual potential unique to human nature. All mystics have pointed out that these polar aspects are inherent in man – his potential to rise higher than the angels or to sink lower than beasts.

See also: **basharīyah** (▸2), **insānīyah**.

ṭabī'ah al-kullī (A), **ṭabī'at-i kullī** (P) *Lit.* universal *(kullī)* nature or temperament *(ṭabī'ah);* the source or 'father' of the four temperaments *(chahār ṭab')* – heat, cold, dryness and moisture.

See also: **ābā' wa-ummahāt** (3.1), **chahār ṭab'**.

taijasa sharīra (S) *Lit.* body *(sharīra)* of fire *(tejas);* the astral or subtle body *(sūkshma sharīra).*

See also: **body of air**, **sūkshma sharīra**.

tan (P/U/H/Pu) *Lit.* body; hence, the human body. Mystics have a twofold message concerning the human body. It is a transient form:

> O man, what are you proud of?
> Your body *(tan)* will turn to dust,
> and you will return to the cycle of birth and death.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:15.1, SBP p.123*

> Why do you go about so ostentatiously,
> showing off your body *(tan)?*
> It is as fragile as a pot of unbaked clay.
> At the slightest knock, it will break,
> and you will be left bereft, with nothing in your hand.
> *Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Chetāvnī 52, KSS p.60*

It is also the dwelling place of God:

> This body *(tan)* is the temple of the true Lord:
> look within it, O hermit!
> *Sulṭān Bāhū, Bait 17, SBU p.321; cf. SBE (15) pp.238–39*

See also: **deh**, **kāyā**, **nar deh**, **nar nārāyaṇī deh**.

tanmātra (S/H) *Lit.* merely *(mātra)* that *(tat);* that alone; a subtle element, energy, faculty, power, quality or essence of mental energy associated with the five *tattvas* (elemental states of matter); the essential, elementary constituents of creation in the three worlds of the mind, according to Vedantic metaphysics.

The five *tanmātras* are one of the more difficult Vedantic concepts to understand. They are the five essences, blueprints or seed forms of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell, which give rise to the five gross elements *(pañcha-tattvas* or *mahābhūtas),* namely, *ākāsha* (ether), *vāyu* (air), *agni* (fire), *jala* (water) and *pṛithvī* (earth). Being extremely subtle and made up of refined mental energies, neither the *tanmātras* nor the subtle forms of the *tattvas* can be perceived through the normal range of human faculties, although true yogis and mystics can have a direct perception of them, through their more subtle senses.

Each of the five *tanmātras* gives rise to a corresponding *tattva.* Each *tattva* expresses itself or has the qualities of its respective *tanmātra.* Additionally, since each *tattva* arises from the *tattva* preceding it, the qualities of the successive *tanmātras* are present in each successive *tattva,* the qualities being added together progressively. This is summarized in the accompanying table.

Tanmātra *of:*	**Tattva**	*Qualities arising*
shabda (sound)	*ākāsha* (ether)	sound
sparsha (touch)	*vāyu* (air)	sound touch
rūpa (form)	*agni* (fire)	sound touch form
rasa (taste)	*jala* (water)	sound touch form taste
gandha (smell)	*prithvī* (earth)	sound touch form taste smell

***The relationship between the* tanmātras *and the* tattvas**

It is noteworthy that the primary *tanmātra* or quality is that of sound. Sound is essentially the perception of vibrations or movement of material substance. Matter, however inert and unchanging it may seem, is constantly in motion, although a person's outer ears are designed to register only a small part of this movement. The shape and form of things experienced by touching them arise from the dynamic interplay of electromagnetic forces between their constituent molecules, atoms and subatomic particles. The visual perception of form is mediated by light – by electromagnetic vibration or movement. Taste and smell arise from interactions at the molecular level – again due to movement at that level. 'Sound' – as movement or vibration – is thus the basis upon which all the senses or qualities associated with each *tattva* function.

A *tanmātra* is not any sensation in particular, but the essential nature or quality of that sensory function. The *tanmātra* of a sound, for example, is not any particular sound itself, with its unique characteristics, but the essential nature or essence of sound, the 'beingness', archetype or basic nature of sound as a characteristic of matter. Moreover, the *tanmātra* of sound and hearing includes both the essence of sound itself as well as the hearing of it (*i.e.* the experience of sound). In fact, the two are very closely associated, and the one cannot exist without the other, both being aspects of the mind.

There is a fundamental difficulty with all descriptions of the more subtle things in creation. What generally appeals to the intellectual mind is consistent, logical, graphical imagery. It is helpful to be able to construct a mental picture of the way things function. But such imagery is related to how things happen in the world of the physical senses. How things are put together in the more subtle realms of matter, mind and spirit is so different that human words and imagery are simply insufficient to depict them.

See also: **tattva**.

tattva (S/H/Pu), **tatt** (Pu) *Lit.* that *(tat)* -ness *(tva),* a thing as it is in itself; essence, principle; a primary element; also called *bhūta.* The term *tattva* is derived from *tat* (that) and *tva,* a suffix meaning '-ness'. The literal meaning is thus 'that-ness', where 'that' is a means of indicating that nothing can be described as it is. It is what it is and descriptions are something other. A *tattva* is thus the thing in itself, the reality which underlies the word. The highest 'that-ness', essence or *tattva* is ultimate Reality or God Himself, which is beyond names and everything else. In Indian philosophy, it is called the *param Tattva.*

Indian metaphysics describes five primary *tattvas.* The 'substance' of the causal, astral and physical worlds consists of these *tattvas.* The term is commonly translated as 'elements', but it means something very different from a chemical element. In fact, since the word 'element' already possesses so many other meanings, use of the word *tattva* is more accurate and avoids confusion.

The *tattvas* first make their appearance as highly refined or subtle mental energies or essences in the causal realm of the universal mind. They are the pattern, blueprint or seed state of that which exists in the lower realms, reflected downwards through various stages until they are expressed in the physical world in both subtle and gross forms. They have also been called the 'ideas' of what is manifested at lower levels in the creation, in the sense that everything manifest in this world proceeds from ideas or intentions in the mind.

The five *tattvas* are:

ākāsha	ether, space
vāyu or *pavana*	air
agni or *tejas*	fire
jala or *pānī*	water
prithvī	earth

The English translations (earth, water and so on) are generally used for the gross states of matter found in the physical world, but it should be understood that these are a reflection of more subtle states. The *Shiva Saṃhitā* explains:

> From the fivefold combination of the subtle elements in this universe, innumerable gross objects are produced. The intelligence that is confined in them, through *karma,* is called the *jīva.* All this world is derived from the five elements *(bhūtas).* The *jīva* is the enjoyer of the fruits of action.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 1:93; cf. SSV p.14*

In the human body, the *tattvas,* interacting with the *prāṇas* (subtle life energies) and with various energies of the mind, give rise not only to the physically observable body, but also to the five senses *(jñānendriyas),* the five motor functions *(karmendriyas),* five human faculties, five human imperfections, and so on. Consequently, the actual energy of the human constitution is to be found in the subtle tattvic realm. This is summarized in the table on the following page.

Each *tattva* is related to the others. Thus, at the gross physical level, earth or the solid state becomes water, or the liquid state, under the influence of fire. Fire then drives liquid into the gaseous or airy state, and so on.

The fifth *tattva (ākāsha)* is a key to understanding the metaphysics of the creative process. It is the space or 'sky' out of which the other four states are derived. This may be understood in terms of modern science. Physicists say that what are called solids, liquids and gases are really composed almost entirely of so-called empty space with tiny subatomic particles moving around in it, in a highly ordered fashion. The reason a person does not fall through the floor under the influence of gravity is because of attractions and repulsions (known as electromagnetism) between these subatomic particles.

Modern physics, however, goes on to suggest that this apparently empty space, or vacuum, is far from empty. It is actually an ultradense sea of energy, and subatomic 'particles' are really focuses or vortices in this vacuum or spatial energy. Contemporary astrophysicist, Paul Davies, writes:

> A popular theory (of the ultimate origin of the universe) … is the so-called inflationary scenario.… During the inflationary phase, a great deal of energy was produced, but this energy was invisible – locked up in empty space in quantum form. When inflation came to an end, this enormous quantity of energy was then released in the form of matter and radiation.
>
> *Paul Davies, The Cosmic Blueprint, CB p.128*

Physical matter is thus a kaleidoscope of patterns perceived by the five senses in the ocean of spatial or vacuum energy. It is not normally experienced as

Tattva	***Outward Form***	***Sense*** **Indriya** ***(Mental)***	***Sense Organ (Physical)***	***Motor*** **Indriya** ***(Mental)***	***Motor Organ (Physical)***	***Mental Characteristic***	***Physical Characteristic***	***Weakness/ Virtue***
Ākāsha	Vacuum Space	Hearing	Ears	Speech mouth	Throat & Identity	Discrimination capability	Executive Humility	Ego & pride
Air	Gas	Touch	Skin	Manipulation	Hands	Planning	Procurement	Greed & grasping/ Generosity
Fire	Fire & light	Sight	Eyes	Mobility	Legs	Drive	Mobility	Anger/ Tolerance & forgiveness
Water	Liquid	Taste	Tongue	Procreation	Sex organs	Sensitivity & feeling	Procreation	Lust/ Chastity & continence
Earth	Solid	Smell	Nose	Elimination	Rectum	Practicality & grounded-ness	Possession	Attachment/ Detachment & contentment

Aspects of the five tattvas *in human experience* such because no physical sense organ is linked directly into the energy of space. It is perceived by a heightened or expanded consciousness. This energy of space is the gross physical aspect of the *ākāsha tattva.*

Esoterically, it is the configuration of the subtle forms of these *tattvas* within the mind of a creature that determines its ability to be in conscious communication with the physical universe. It is the 'tattvic configuration' determining the completeness of its microcosm that makes the creature what it is. The human microcosm is the only configuration that is totally complete. Thus, man alone, among all the species, has the highest potential for the expression of consciousness, intelligence and the power to discriminate. In fact, he is so designed that he alone can become God-conscious; for in him alone, of all sentient life, the *ākāsha tattva* is 'active'.

Following traditional Hindu accounts, Indian mystics have explained that the physical realm is populated by 8,400,000 kinds of species. These, they say, can be divided up according to the number of *tattvas* 'active' within each. The other *tattvas* are present, but 'dormant'. For example:

Plants & vegetable kingdom:	water
Insects & invertebrates:	fire and air, fire and water, or fire and earth
Fishes:	fire and water
Reptiles:	fire and earth
Birds:	fire, air and water
Mammals, marsupials:	fire, air, water and earth
Human beings:	fire, air, water, earth and *ākāsha.*

The essential tattvic configuration lies in the subtle energy fields of the mind, but this is to some degree reflected in the gross, bodily form. Many species in the vegetable kingdom, for instance, consist of a very high percentage of water. Note also that plants are the only living creatures possessing no fire *tattva* in active form. Fire, at a mental level, gives a creature the idea that it can and would like to move about. Physically and externally, this is expressed in the motor function of legs, wings, fins and so on. Plants, having no fire *tattva* in their make-up have no mental conception of 'getting about' – nor do they possess any direct means of doing so. The inner mental conception of mobility and its external expression as limbs of one kind or another are integral aspects of other creatures. Plants, therefore, remain rooted to the spot. Even their seeds have to rely on air, water or other creatures for their dispersal.

Similarly, while all other creatures from bees to bulls express the emotion that may be termed anger, plants never get angry, though they are sensitive and responsive to other creatures and to their environment. They have no drive to relocate themselves or to achieve anything in the sense that higher creatures do, and therefore they cannot be frustrated in the attempt. Drive, achievement and the associated weaknesses of frustration and anger are all expressions of the individual mind interacting with the fiery *tattva,* which is essentially dormant in plants.

All creatures, contrary to much of Western thought, possess a mind and soul, for soul is the life force, and mind is the creator of all forms and the mediator of destiny. Thus, under the influence of *karma* – the law of the mind – souls take birth in different bodies, according to their actions, desires and mental characteristics during previous lives within the cycle. A physical body and the destiny it undergoes reflects precisely the inner content of that mind.

The greater the number of *tattvas,* then the greater the consciousness of the creature. The greater is its consciousness, then the greater its suffering when its life is taken – and the greater the karmic burden accruing to its destroyer. Yet the creation is so arranged that life must live on life. Only plants can live entirely upon inert matter (though even some of them are parasitic or live on insects and other creatures). Killing for food is thus a very powerful means by which souls become entangled in a web of *karma* from which escape is very difficult. The lower creatures, however, are primarily reaping the effects of *karma.* It is in the human form, where the soul has the illusion of apparent free choice, that new *karma* – good or bad – is made.

This is why Saints advise that those seeking spiritual liberation and freedom from *karma* and the entanglements of the mind should only take the lives of species from the vegetable kingdom for their food. That is, they should be completely vegetarian. *Karma* is still created by taking the lives of species from the plant kingdom, but it is minimal and can be paid off by meditation to a greater or lesser degree. On the other hand, the *karma* created by taking the lives of higher creatures for food is enough to prevent significant spiritual progress.

The five *tattvas* are an integral aspect of human life, expressing themselves in a variety of ways in every field of human experience. The five senses and their five motor counterparts, the five faculties and their corresponding weaknesses and virtues, the five *chakras* lying below the eye centre and their administration of bodily processes, human personality and its individual characteristics – all of these are related to the balance and activity of the five *tattvas.*

See also: **ākāsha**, **chakra**, **jala**, **karma** (6.3), **prāṇa**, **pṛithvī**, **tanmātra**, **tejas**, **vāyu**, **wǔ hsíng** (5.2).

Tat tvam asi (S) *Lit.* thou *(tvam)* art *(asi)* That *(Tat).* One of the *mahāvākyas* (great utterances) from the *Upanishads,* regarded as the essence of their teachings, *Tat tvam asi* being from the *Chhāndogya Upanishad (Sāma Veda). Tat* (That) refers to *Brahman* or *Ātman* as the supreme Reality or Self, *tvam* (thou) to the *ātman,* the individual self or soul. It means that there is no essential difference between the individual *(ātman)* and ultimate Reality *(Brahman).* This is the central tenet of *Advaita Vedānta.* The fuller text reads:

> That which is the subtle essence –
>   in that all beings have their existence.
> That is the Reality. That is the Self *(Ātman).*
> O Shvetaketu, thou art That *(Tat tvam asi).*
>
> *Chhāndogya Upanishad 6:8.7*

See also: **ahaṃ Brahmāsmi**, **mahāvākya**, **sohang** (▸2).

tejas (S), **tej** (H) *Lit.* fire; hence, flame, glow, radiance, light, lustre, beauty; strength, power; esoterically, the fire *tattva,* one of the five *tattvas,* possessing both gross and subtle aspects.

See also: **tattva**.

temple of God A temple is a place of worship; esoterically, the temple of God refers to the human form, the human body, highlighting the fact that although man is in the habit of worshipping particular deities or God Himself in various forms of man-made temple, according to different religious customs, the real place in which He is to be found and worshipped is within the human body. The term was used extensively in early Christian times. Paul writes, for instance:

> Know ye not that ye are the temple of God,
>   and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?
>
> *1 Corinthians 3:16, KJV*

Referring to the various forms of idol worship prevalent in Greece and throughout the Roman Empire in his time, he contrasts the temples of dead idols with the body as the "temple of the living God":

> And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?
> For ye are the temple of the living God.
> As God hath said:
> "I will dwell in them, and walk in them,
>   and I will be their God, and they shall be my people....
> And I will be a Father unto you,
>   and ye shall be my sons and daughters,
>   saith the Lord Almighty."[1]
>
> *2 Corinthians 6:16, 18, KJV*

Paul is amalgamating and paraphrasing various sayings from the Jewish prophets to support his point. Likewise, the author of *Acts of the Apostles* credits Paul with a speech to the Athenians in which he makes the same point:

> God that made the world and all things therein,
>   seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth,
>   dwelleth not in temples made with hands;
> Neither is worshipped with men's hands,
>   as though He needed any thing,
>   seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;
> And hath made of one blood all nations of men
>   for to dwell on all the face of the earth,
>   and hath determined the times before appointed,
>   and the bounds of their habitation;
> That they should seek the Lord,
>   if haply they might feel after Him,
>   and find Him, though he be not far from every one of us:
> "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being,"
>   as certain also of your own poets have said,
>   "For we are also His offspring."
>
> *Acts 17:24–28, KJV*

God is not far from us, he points out, quoting from Greek literature, possibly Aratus of Cilicia or the opening lines of the *Hymn to Zeus* by Cleanthēs.

It is perhaps a literalization of this metaphor that underlies the gospel story of Jesus' disapproval of those who conducted business in the temple:

> And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called the house of prayer,'[2] but ye have made it 'a den of thieves'."[3]
>
> *Matthew 21:12–13, KJV*

Christian scholars have frequently observed that many of the gospel stories have been invented retrospectively by the gospel compilers as settings for collections of Jesus' sayings. Sometimes, as in this instance, these stories cloud the original meaning.

The body as the temple of God is an expression that appears extensively in early Christian literature. In the *Acts of Thomas,* Judas Thomas says:

> Blessed are the bodies of the holy,
>   for they have been made worthy to become temples of God.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 94, ANT p.406*

Similarly, when baptizing a group of people, he says:

> Make them holy shrines and temples of yourself,
> and let your Holy Spirit dwell in them.
> *Acts of Thomas 156; cf. AAA p.289, ANT p.433*

And one of those who hear him speak requests:

> I beg of you, apostle of the new God, …
> that you would turn unto me too, and pray for me,
> that I also may obtain grace from this God whom you preach, …
> and that I too may become a holy temple
> and He may dwell in me.
> *Acts of Thomas VIII; cf. AAA p.222*

Again, one of the gnostic writers from the Nag Hammadi texts speaks of finding God, "this One" in "your temple":

> Blessed are you, O soul, if you find this One in your temple.
> *Teachings of Silvanus 109, NHS30 pp.344–45*

Likewise, a Pythagorean of early Christian times asserts:

> You have in yourself, something akin to God,
> and (should) therefore use yourself as the temple of God.
> *Sentences of Sextus; cf. ILP p.192*

In the *Epistle of Barnabas,* from an unknown hand – a letter that generally condemns the performance of external religious practices – the writer expresses his displeasure with a group of Christians who had recently built a temple, and consecrated it for worship:

> I will also speak with you concerning the temple, and show how the wretched men erred by putting their hope on the building, and not on the God who made them, and is the true house of God. For they consecrated Him in the temple almost like the heathen.
> *Epistle of Barnabas XVI:1–2, AF1 pp.396–97*

The writer goes on to quote Isaiah, who points out that if the Lord encompasses everything, then what building can man construct which could be expected to house Him?

> But learn how the Lord speaks, in bringing it (what they did) to naught, "Who has measured the heaven with a span, or the earth with

> his outstretched hand?" "Have not I?" saith the Lord. "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool, what house will ye build for me, or what is the place of my rest?" You know that their hope was vain.
>
> *Epistle of Barnabas XVI:2, AF1 pp.396–97, Isaiah 40:12, 60:1*

If God is present everywhere and within one's own self, he says, why try to confine Him to a temporal and material, man-made construction? The writer then continues by inquiring how and where the real temple of God can be built:

> But let us inquire if a (real) temple of God exists. Yes, it exists, where He Himself said that He makes and perfects it. For it is written, "And it shall come to pass … that a temple of God shall be built gloriously in the Name of the Lord."[4]
>
> I find then that a temple exists. Learn then how it will be built in the "Name of the Lord". Before we believed in God, the habitation of our heart was corrupt and weak, like a temple really built with hands, because it was full of idolatry, and was the house of demons through doing things which were contrary to God. But it "shall be built in the Name of the Lord".
>
> *Epistle of Barnabas XVI:6–8, AF1 pp.396–99*

A worldly and material person is compared to a temple full of "idolatry" – the worship or idolizing of material objects – and to a "house of demons", referring to the continuous and 'devilish' activity of human passions and weaknesses within a person's mind, that make them behave badly – "contrary to God" – in this world.

He then goes on to explain how the "temple of the Lord may be built gloriously" or spiritually. He says that it is through receiving the remission of sins and putting faith in the Name. In this way, a human being is rebuilt or reborn spiritually from within:

> Now give heed, in order that (you may understand how) the temple of the Lord may be built gloriously. Learn in what way (this can come about). When we received the remission of sins, and put our hope on the Name, we became new, being created again from the beginning; wherefore God truly dwells in us, in the habitation which we are.
>
> How? His Word of faith, the calling of His promise, the Wisdom of the ordinances (the Law), the commands of the teaching, … Himself dwelling in us, by opening the door of the temple … to us, giving repentance to us, and thus He leads us, who have been enslaved to death, into the incorruptible temple.… This is a spiritual temple being built for the Lord.
>
> *Epistle of Barnabas XVI:8–10, AF1 pp.398–99*

He says that the beginnings of the "spiritual temple" are built at the time of mystic baptism or initiation, when the soul is mystically baptized into the "Name" of God, also called the "Word of faith", the true "Wisdom" or the Law of God. Then the soul is called, as He had promised and, following the "commands of the teaching", begins to follow the mystic path of this Word. "He" also makes His "dwelling in us" by "opening the door of the temple". The writer is referring to the opening of the inner spiritual path when the soul is led from enslavement to the body of "death", the physical body, into the "incorruptible temple" within.

See also: **Hari mandir**, **mosque** (▸2).

1. *cf. Leviticus* 26:11–12; *Ezekiel* 37:27; *Isaiah* 52:11; *Jeremiah* 51:45.
2. *Isaiah* 56:7.
3. *Jeremiah* 7:11.
4. His reference is unknown.

Ṭhākur dwārā (H/Pu) *Lit.* door *(dwārā)* of the Lord *(Ṭhākur);* the gateway to God; hence, a temple, an idol house; also, the human form, as the gateway through which a soul must pass in order to attain union with God:

> *Mahātmās* tell us that the truest *gurdwārā,* temple *(mandir),* mosque *(masjid), Ṭhākur dwār,* synagogue or church is our own body, nothing else. If, with an unbiased mind, we research the teachings of any mystic, we will find that God lives within us.
>
> *Mahārāj Charan Singh, Satsang Sangrah 3, SS3 p.57*

See also: **Hari mandir**, **mandir**, **temple of God**.

ṭilasm (A), **ṭilism** (P) *Lit.* magic, charm, spell, illusion, spectacle; hence also, a talisman, a small object, often precious, usually with some particular carving or engraving on it which is believed to provide protection from evil.

Rūmī says that life in the body casts a "spell *(ṭilism)*" such that the body ("bones") is deemed more important than the "spirit". When the illusion "is shattered", then the spirit realizes its oneness with the "Water of Life", as well as the divine "Giver" of that "Water":

> Seek the spirit, set not your heart on bones;
> For that beauty of the heart is the lasting beauty:
>   its lips give to drink of the Water of Life.
> Truly it is both the Water,
>   and the Giver of drink and the drunken:

All three become one when your spell *(ṭilism)* is shattered.
That oneness you cannot know by reasoning.
Serve (God) and refrain from foolish gabble,
O undiscerning man!
Your reality is the form and that which is borrowed:
you rejoice in what is relative and merely rhyme.

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:715–19; cf. MJR2 p.258

trees, trees of life Metaphors or similes sometimes used in early Middle Eastern mystic literature for human beings. In one of the biblical psalms, for instance, the author speaks of the devotees as "palm trees" grown "tall as the cedars of Lebanon", being "planted in the house of *Yahweh*, … still bearing fruit in old age" and "still remaining fresh and green" – retaining the vibrancy and power of inner life – "flourishing in the courts of our God":

The virtuous flourish like palm trees,
and grow as tall as the cedars of Lebanon.
Planted in the house of *Yahweh*,
they will flourish in the courts of our God,
still bearing fruit in old age,
still remaining fresh and green,
to proclaim that *Yahweh* is righteous –
My rock in whom no fault is to be found!

Psalm 92:12–15, JB

Similarly, the biblical prophet, Joel, writing ostensibly of the ruin of Israel, is alluding metaphorically to the spiritual destitution of the people:

The vine has withered,
the fig tree wilts away;
Pomegranate, and palm, and apple –
every tree in the field is drooping.
Yes, gladness has faded among the sons of men.

Joel 1:12, JB

The analogy of a human being as a tree of life is also used by the author of the *Psalms of Solomon*, which bear considerable resemblances to the psalms from the Dead Sea Scrolls, coming from the same pre-Christian period of Jewish mysticism. Speaking of the devotees of the Lord as His "holy ones", as "trees of life" in the "garden of the Lord", he says that they are planted and eternally "rooted", and will find the realm of eternal "life":

In the garden of the Lord,
the trees of life are His holy ones.
Their planting is rooted forever:
They shall not be uprooted as long heaven shall last….
The Lord's holy ones shall inherit life with joy.

Psalms of Solomon 14:3–4, 10; cf. AOT p.673, OTP2 p.663

The term is also found in a more familiar context in Matthew, though the allusion has often been missed. John the Baptist says:

And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees:
Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit
is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Matthew 3:10, KJV

The "trees" here are probably human beings. Those who "bringeth not forth" the fruit of spirituality will be cast back into the fire of this creation.

The Mandaeans also used similar imagery. Here, the "building built by Life (God)" is the human form:

In a building built by Life good trees flourish.
Fragrant is the Perfume of the trees
with the Perfume of *Mandā-ḏ-Hiia* that pervades them.

Mandaean Prayer Book 100; cf. CPM p.101

Mandā-ḏ-Hiia (Knowledge or *Gnosis* of Life) is the name of a mythical Mandaean Saviour. The passage means that the "Perfume" (the Word) permeating the Saviour also permeates the "trees" or souls of his disciples.

The metaphor is also found in the Manichaean writings, as in a passage where the devotee begs the Saint to

cause the flowers and fruits
of the tree of my nature (soul) to thrive.

Manichaean Hymns, LSMH p.178:31

See also: **Tree of Life** (3.1), **vines**.

udān(a) (S/H) *Lit.* upwards *(ud)* breath *(ana);* the ascending breath; one of the five *prāṇas;* the *prāṇa* associated with the throat *chakra,* so called because it rises upwards from the throat into the head, controlling the intake of air and food. It is also described as the *prāṇa* that "helps the soul in its passage from the body"[1] at death, and is utilized by yogis in the ascent of the soul from the body during life.

See also: **prāṇa**, **tattva**, **vishuddha chakra**.

1. Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāra* 2:81.

ummahāt al-arba'ah, al- (A), **ummahāt-i arba'ah** (P) *Lit.* the four *(arba'ah)* mothers *(ummahāt);* the four elements (A./P. *arba' 'anāṣir;* P. *chahār 'anāṣir, chār 'unṣur)* of earth, air, fire and water called, metaphorically, the four mothers of the physical body. They are the four subtle essences or energies which interact and combine to form the physical universe and physical bodies; the material earth, water, fire and air are the gross manifestations of these four subtle essences.

In the body, the four mothers are separated from their children; that is, each element is mixed with all the others, and is imprisoned in this mixture. Speaking of the desire of every part of creation to return to its origin, Rūmī depicts the 'four mothers' as calling continually to their 'children' to come home. As a principle in creation, every part seeks to return to its source. The physical elements 'wish' to be freed from involvement with physical bodies, the mind seeks its origin in the universal mind, and the soul seeks its divine Source in God. This is the basis of Rūmī's story of "How each element *('unṣur)* attracts its own kind that has been imprisoned in the human constitution by the non-homogeneous (elements)":

> Earth says to the earth of the body,
> "Return! Take leave of the spirit,
>   come to me like the dust.
> You are my kind, you are more suited to be with me:
>   'tis better that you should escape from that body
>   and that moisture."
> It answers, "Yes; but I am fettered,
>   although, like you, I am weary of separation."
>
> The waters seek the moisture of the body, saying,
> "O moisture, come back to us from exile."
> The aether *(aśīr)* is calling the heat of the body, saying,
> "You are of fire: find the way to your origin."
>
> There are seventy-two diseases in the body,
>   caused by the elements *('anāṣir)* pulling without cord.
> Disease comes to shatter the body,
>   so that the elements *('anāṣir)* may abandon each other.
> These elements *('anāṣir)* are four birds
>   with their legs tied together:

Death and sickness and disease loose their legs.
When death has released their legs from one another,
assuredly every bird-element *('unṣur)* flies away.
The pull between these originals and derivatives
continually implants some pain in our bodies,
in order that it may rend these coalitions asunder
and that each part, like a bird, may fly to its home;
Divine providence hinders them from this hastening
and keeps them together in health till the appointed term,
saying, "Since O parts, the term is not certainly known to you:
'tis useless for you to take wing before the term."

Inasmuch as every part of the body seeks support,
what must be the state of the soul,
a stranger, in separation from its home?

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:4421–34; cf. MJR4 p.247

See also: **arba' 'anāṣir**, **tattva**.

upādhi (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* deceit, illusion, trick, fraud; limitation; flaw, disorder, affliction, deformity, turbulence; trouble, calamity, annoyance, mischief, quarrel, conflict, discontent. An *upādhi* arises from the apparent influence of one thing on another, like the seeming redness of a crystal before a rose, or the colour of the ocean reflected from the sky. The term is used in Vedantic philosophy to denote an illusory limiting factor or condition imposed upon the self or *ātman.* Just as a cup or a jar appears to enclose and isolate a portion of infinite space, or like the jagged outline of a mountain range appears to limit the expanse of the sky – when, in fact, neither space nor the sky is actually limited thereby – similarly, it is *māyā* (illusion) or *avidyā* (spiritual ignorance, nescience) which causes the *ātman* (soul) to appear as the individual *jīva* (incarnate soul). The one undivided Reality *(Brahman)* is never divided, even in the phenomenal world. Just as the infinite cannot be made finite, so too the One cannot really be divided. Shankara explains this using the example of the attempt to confine an infinite space in a finite pot:

> Just as one infinite space enclosed or limited in a pot or a room is said to be thus divided, so also the one single Reality seems to be variously differentiated due to the limiting factor *(upādhi)* (of *māyā*).
>
> *Shankara, on Brahma Sūtras 2:1.13*

Swāmī Nikhilānanda comments in the same vein:

> *Māyā*, both in its cosmic and in its individual aspect, hides the true nature of *Brahman*. Thus the infinite and eternal Absolute appears as a finite being, limited by time and space. In association with the cosmic *māyā*, … *Brahman* appears as *Īshvara* or the personal God, and in association with the individual *māyā*, as the *jīva*, or individual soul. Thus, *māyā* becomes the *upādhi*, or limiting adjunct, of *Brahman*.
>
> An *upādhi* seems to alter or limit the true nature of an object. The formless sky appears to possess sharp lines when viewed through jagged peaks or skyscrapers. But this limitation is only apparent, not real. It is the association with the *upādhis* of various material bodies that makes *Brahman* appear as gods, angels, men, animals, birds, trees and stones.… But it must not be forgotten that the *upādhi* does not bring about any real change in *Brahman*. When the *upādhi* is discarded, the object regarded as finite by the ignorant is realized as *Brahman*.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS p.58*

Under the influence of *māyā* and all its ramifications, the pure soul or *ātman*, possessing the universal consciousness of *Brahman*, becomes the *jīva* or unliberated soul, while *Brahman* as the universal God becomes the personal God perceived by the followers of most religions. The idea is brought out clearly by Shankara in his *Ātmabodha:*

> All-pervading space *(ākāsha)*, like the omnipresent Truth, appears differentiated due to its association with the various conditionings *(upādhis)*, becoming one on their destruction.
>
> Because of Its (*Brahman*'s) association with various *upādhis*, caste, colour, status and so forth are superimposed upon the *ātman*, just as flavour, colour and so on are superimposed on water.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 10–11*

Three main *upādhis* are usually listed as the limiting factors on the *ātman*, bringing the pure and free soul to the condition of the seemingly captive *jīva*. These are the three bodies, the *sthūla sharīra* (gross physical body), the *sūkshma sharīra* (subtle body) and the *kāraṇa sharīra* (the causal body). Hence, Shankara says:

> *Avidyā* (spiritual ignorance), indescribable and beginningless, is said to be the cause, which is an *upādhi* superimposed on the *ātman*. Be assured that the *ātman* is other than the three *upādhis*.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 14*

The Saints have also spoken of the illusory limitations under which the soul labours, and the means by which these limitations can be overcome. In this context, *upādhi* refers more to the restlessness, anxieties and conflicts that continually agitate the mind:

> Practising the *Guru*'s Word *(Bachan)*, by the *Guru*'s grace,
> my mind again wanders not anywhere.
> My woe is dispelled (freed from conflict, *upādhi*),
> I am seated in trance of peace (*sukh samādh*),
> and the Lord, the lover of His devotees,
> I have attained to within my home.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1214–15, MMS*

And Guru Arjun advises:

> Rise early in the morning, repeat the Name,
> and night and day meditate on the Lord:
> No anxiety shall befall thee,
> and thy calamity (*upādhi*, troubles) shall vanish.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 255, MMS*

See also: **avidyā** (6.2), **māyā** (6.2).

urvā (Av) *Lit.* soul, life; used by Zarathushtra for the soul. In later Persian, the term, as *arvāḥ,* was also used for 'souls', plural of *rūḥ*.

See also: **geush urvā**, **rūḥ**.

vāyu (S/H) *Lit.* air; the gaseous state of matter; one of the five *tattvas* having both gross and subtle aspects; also used synonymously with *prāṇa*.

See also: **prāṇa**, **tattva**.

vijñāna (Ṡ) *Lit. vi* + knowledge *(jñāna);* intelligence, intellect, knowledge, cognition, wisdom, understanding, discrimination, discernment, science; sometimes, specifically, knowledge derived from worldly experience, as distinguished from *jñāna* or knowledge of *Brahman* acquired by meditation; sometimes, the meanings of *jñāna* and *vijñāna* are reversed; also, one of the five *skandhas* (factors) of Buddhism, where it is often translated as consciousness. The prefix *vi* generally conveys a sense of distribution, division, distinction, opposition and so on; hence, perhaps, knowledge of the world, as opposed to divine knowledge; but the *vi* does not always modify the meaning of a word, and is not very significant to the meaning in this instance.

Vijñāna is the normal consciousness which provides a sense of human intelligence and cognition, and thus a relationship between the individual and the seemingly objective world. It is the human mind, the limitation *(upādhi)* placed upon the *ātman* by means of which the individual is aware of the physical world, and gains experience of life.

Vijñāna also includes the realm of the subconscious, where experiences of the past *(sanskāras)* are registered and retained, resulting in the characteristics of the next life in this world.

But the term has a spread of meaning and, in the *Bhagavad Gītā, jñāna* and *vijñāna* are used together in a general sense for the highest divine knowledge or *gnosis:*

Now I shall tell you in full
  of that knowledge *(jñāna)* and wisdom *(vijñāna)*
  by knowing which,
  nothing more remains to be understood.

Bhagavad Gītā 7:2

In the *Kaṭha Upanishad, vijñāna* is the higher discriminating intelligence or understanding of one with a mind under control:

He who has understanding *(vijñāna),*
  who has control over his mind,
  and always remains pure –
He attains that goal
  from which he will not be born again.

Kaṭha Upanishad 1:3.8

In the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad, vijñāna* is the intelligence, which, in its highest form, is the essence of the "infinite Being":

Just as a lump of salt thrown into water
  dissolves in the water, and cannot be removed again,
  yet every part tasted is salty –
Even so, my dear, this great, boundless, infinite Being
  is pure Intelligence *(Vijñāna)* alone.

Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 2:4.12

See also: **skandha**.

vijñānamaya-kosha (S) *Lit.* sheath or covering *(kosha)* filled with or made up of *(maya)* intellect or intelligence *(vijñāna);* the fourth of the five *koshas* covering the *ātman* or soul, according to the *Upanishads,* equivalent to the *buddhi,* that aspect of the human mind which provides man with his particular kind of intelligence, intellect and reasoning ability.

See also: **antaḥkaraṇa**, **kosha**.

vine of the five branches An epithet given to the soul in one of the Manichaean psalms which echoes the words of Jesus in the *Gospel of Thomas* where he speaks of the Five Trees "which remain undisturbed summer and winter" and "whose leaves do not fall".[1] The Five Trees are the five Sounds which support the five main realms or *aeons* of creation. These are the natural heritage of the soul, which is thus called the "vine of the five branches":

> O soul, O soul, be mindful of your *aeons....*
> O soul, from where have you come? You are from on high.
> You are a stranger to the world, a sojourner on the earth....
> You have your houses on high, your tents of joy....
> You are the sheep that wandered in the desert.
> Your Father seeks you, your shepherd searches for you.
> You are the vine of the five branches.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.181*

See also: **Five Trees** (3.1), **regions** (4.1).

1. *Gospel of Thomas* 36:19, *NHS20* pp.60–61.

vines, vine trees Mystically, souls, especially the baptized or initiated. Just as the Vine, the True Vine or the First Vine were used as variant metaphors for the Tree of Life, and just as souls were sometimes referred to as trees, so too were they called the 'vines' or 'vine trees'. One of the Manichaean psalms, for instance, praises the mystic, Mānī, equating his "sons" or disciples with his "vine trees":

> Lo, your holy churches have spread out
> to the four corners of the world.
> Lo, your vine trees have filled every place.
> Lo, your sons have become famous in all lands.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCXXIV, MPB p.113*

The term is used extensively in Mandaean literature. In one verse, the souls are described as the "young vines" and the "sons" of the "Vine of Life" or the "wondrous Vine" – the creative Power:

> The wondrous Vine blessed her young vines, her sons,
> and said to them:
> "You shall have strength and increase,
> and the lustre and the glory of the Jordan (Living Water),
> and an assignment in the worlds of light."

Mandaean Prayer Book 376; cf. CPM p.275

Another poem relates a short allegory concerning the mythical princess Miryaī, depicted as both the devoted soul whom the Saviour has come to heal or redeem, as well as the personification of divine "Truth" itself. And her companions or other souls are portrayed as "plants" and "vines". They are souls who are to be "made whole" by drinking Living Water (the creative Power, another common Mandaean term) symbolized as the Euphrates. The Saviour says:

> "I have come to heal Miryaī,
> (come) to bring water to the good beloved plants,
> to the vines who stand at the mouth of the Euphrates.
> In a (pure) white pail I draw water,
> and bring it to my plants.
> I bear and I hold it on arms of splendour,
> which are my own.
> I bear and I hold it, and give them to drink.
> Well for him who has drunk of my water.
> He drinks, finds healing, and is made whole,
> and grows to twice (his stature)."
>
> And the vines who drank water, brought forth good fruit:
> their leaves turned upwards and appeared magnificent.
> The branches which drank no water,
> brought forth bitter herbs and wormwood.
> Woe to those who have not gone forward upon the Way;
> Woe to those who have not passed on by the way stone!
> They hated the treasure house of Life, Miryaī, the dear Truth.

Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.135; cf. GJB p.66, JM pp.132–33, MEM p.153

The use of such metaphors highlights the mystical meaning in some passages from the *Song of Songs,* where the vines would again seem to mean the souls themselves. Hence, the lover praises her Beloved as the best among souls:

My Beloved is a cluster of henna flowers
among the vines of Eyn-gedi.

Song of Songs 1:14, JB

And she speaks of her blossoming devotion as a flowering vine in a vineyard in which the "little foxes" of passions and desires are "making havoc":

Catch the foxes for us,
the little foxes
that make havoc of the vineyards,
for our vineyards are in flower.

Song of Songs 2:15, JB

In a similar vein, the Beloved speaks of the vines in the valley of this world. He goes to see if they are "budding" – to see if they are awakening to a life of the spirit:

I went down to the nut orchard
to see what was sprouting in the valley,
to see if the vines were budding
and the pomegranate trees in flower.

Song of Songs 6:11, JB

Like many other such metaphors, it is not confined to the Middle East. Indian mystics have also used the same analogy. The sixteenth-century mystic Dādū is explicit:

God is the mighty Tree on whose support
the vine of the soul, the inmost essence, flourishes.
When watered by a Saint, O Dādū,
this vine bears the Fruit of Immortality *(Amar Phal).*

Dādū, Bānī 1, Belī 6, DDB1 p.243; cf. DCM p.101

And:

The immortal vine is the soul.
When planted in the sea (of the world),
it withers away due to the salt (of sensuality),
and bears not the Fruit of Immortality *(Amar Phal).*

Dādū, Bānī 1, Belī 11, DDB1 p.244, DCM p.101

And again:

> The vine is of a very high quality;
> Plant it in good soil (of purity),
> irrigate it with good water (Living Water),
> and eat the Fruit of Immortality *(Amar Phal),* O Dādū.
>
> *Dādū, Bānī 1, Belī 13, DDB1 p.244; cf. DCM p.101*

vishuddha chakra (S/H) *Lit.* completely pure *(vishuddha)* wheel *(chakra);* the fifth centre or *chakra* in the physical body, situated at the throat level; the centre of pranic energy and organization associated with the *ākāsha tattva;* also called the *kaṇṭha chakra.* The presiding deity at this centre is generally said to be *Shakti* or *Ashṭāngī,* the 'mother' of the lower deities or powers, the energy source of the lower centres.

The *vishuddha chakra* is the administrator of the four lower centres. Just as *ākāsha* is the space or energy field out of which the entire physical creation (made up of the four other *tattvas*) is manifested, so too, in the body system, is the general metabolism and the basal metabolic rate administered through this centre. Its associated endocrine glands, for instance – the thyroid and parathyroids – have their finger on the pulse of all bodily biochemical interactions.

The *vishuddha chakra* is described as a sixteen-petalled lotus, the petals relating to the energy functions administered at this centre. The yogic *mantra* traditionally repeated at this centre is *shring* or *ashṭāng*. The *Shiva Saṃhitā* says:

> This *chakra,* situated in the throat, is the fifth, and is called the *vishuddha* lotus. Its colour is brilliant like gold; it is adorned with sixteen petals; it is the seat of the vowel sounds *(i.e.,* its sixteen petals are designated by the sixteen vowels – *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ṛi, ṛī, ḷri, ḷrī, e, ai, o, au, aṃ, aḥ).* Its presiding adept is called *Chhagalanda,* and its presiding goddess is called *Sākini.*
>
> He who always contemplates on it is truly the lord of the *yogīs,* and deserves to be called wise; by meditation on the *vishuddha* lotus, the *yogī* spontaneously understands the four *Vedas* and their mysteries.
>
> When the *yogī,* fixing his mind on this secret spot, feels angry, then undoubtedly all three worlds begin to tremble.
>
> Even if the mind of the *yogī* becomes absorbed in this place by chance, then he becomes unconscious of the external world, and certainly enjoys the inner world.
>
> His body never grows weak, and he retains his full strength for a thousand years; it becomes harder than adamant.
>
> When the *yogī* ceases this contemplation, then thousands of years in this world appear to him as so many moments.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 5:90–95; cf. SSV pp.68–69*

See also: **ākāsha**, **chakra**, **prāṇa**, **tattva**.

vyān(a) (S/H) *Lit.* pervading *(vy)* breath *(ana);* the diffusing breath; one of the five aspects of *prāṇa* or subtle life energy which "moves in all directions, pervading the entire body";[1] the *prāṇa* associated with the water *tattva,* administered from the genital or *svādhishṭhāna chakra;* responsible for administering the circulation and distribution of vital energy throughout the body.

See also: **prāṇa**, **tattva**, **vishuddha chakra**.

1. Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāra* 2:80.

wahm (A), **vahm** (P) *Lit.* imagination, fancy, conjecture, illusion; also, as understanding, apprehension, conception or opinion, one of the five faculties of mind *(ḥawāss al-bāṭin),* the faculty that understands and forms an opinion about the data that has been processed by *al-ḥiss al-mushtarak* (the 'common sense') and the *khayāl* (faculty of thought and imagination).

Because the faculty of *wahm* is incapable of understanding or reaching an accurate opinion about spiritual Truth, it is often associated in mystical writings with conjecture or opinion, as opposed to knowledge. Sometimes it carries the connotation of delusion or illusion or fantasy. To some extent, this world can be understood through *wahm,* but not the worlds beyond:

> It is a power which understands insignificant meanings. To the lovers of God, it signifies the created world.
>
> *Ja'far Sajjādī, FLI p.794*

Sometimes, a person may imagine that *vahm* has brought him to an understanding of God, but Rūmī says:

> If he conceives that he is in love with the Essence,
> conception *(vahm)* of the (divine) Names and Attributes
> is not the Essence.
> Conception *(vahm)* is begotten of qualities and definition:
> God is not begotten – "He is not begotten."[1]
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2757–58; cf. MJR2 p.150*

Wahm is sometimes contrasted with *'aql. 'Aql* (the higher mind or intelligence) may be called 'spiritual intelligence', because it has the capacity to perceive and apprehend realities above the limitations of the physical senses:

> *Wahm* is a power in the human body, and it is located at the end of the middle ventricle of the cerebrum. It understands small and insignificant meanings of the tangible things. This is the power that orders the sheep to run away from the wolf, or that the child should be dealt with affectionately. It rules over all the other powers of the body, just as wisdom *('aql)* rules over all the intellectual forces.
>
> *Jurjānī, Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt, in FNI9 p.9*

Ibn 'Arabī speaks of the dominance of *wahm* as imagination and fancy in the mental processes of most people. As many mystics have said, spiritual uplift requires mental vigilance and clear thinking, so that mystic knowledge can eliminate *wahm:*

> Knowledge cannot be overcome by imagination *(wahm);* hence its superiority over imagination *(wahm).* This is why knowledge and vigilance are essential, so that imagination *(wahm)* may not overcome knowledge and render it useless.
>
> *Ibn 'Arabī, in AMAS p.1241, in FNI9 p.11*

Vahm thus has great power; it can impose fear and limitations on man:

> If there be a path half an ell wide on the ground,
>   a man will walk safely without imagining *(vahm);*
> If you walk on the top of a high wall,
>   you will stagger even if its width be two ells;
> Nay, through imagination *(vahm)* and from trembling of heart,
>   you will be on the point of falling.
> Consider well, and understand the fear
>   that is due to imagination *(vahm).*
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:1559–61, MJR4 p.88*

Vahm thus includes not only imagination and fancy, but also apprehension and doubt:

> There is a saying in the East that there is one illness for which there is no remedy, and that illness is called *vahm,* which means imagination. In every illness the imagination plays its role. The greater the imagination, the greater becomes that illness. But apart from illness, in every little thing in life imagination makes mischief, exaggerates it, and makes it more difficult to bear.
>
> *Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK4 p.48*

'Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī says very much the same. It is, he says, the source of hallucination and psychosomatic symptoms:

> The power of imagination *(vahm)* can even produce images and forms outside as well as inside man. The force of this power makes people feel thirsty or hungry, get sick, or even die. *Vahm* has a powerful effect on human beings.
>
> *Nasafī, al-Insān al-Kāmil 18:5, IK pp.240–41*

Rūmī summarizes by comparing imagination and fancy *(vahm)* with *'aql,* which in this context refers to the essential wisdom of the spirit:

> Explaining that imagination *(vahm)* is the counterfeit of wisdom *(qulb-i 'aql)* and in opposition to it, and that though it resembles wisdom *('aql),* it is not wisdom *('aql)….*
>
> Wisdom *('aql)* is the contrary of sensuality:
> O brave man, do not call wisdom *('aql)*
> that which is attached to sensuality.
> That which is a beggar of sensuality – call it imagination *(vahm):*
> imagination *(vahm)* is the counterfeit
> of the sterling gold of the spiritual faculties.
> Without a touchstone, imagination *(vahm)* and wisdom *('aql)*
> are not clearly distinguished:
> Quickly bring both to the touchstone.
>
> The *Qur'ān* and the (spiritual) state of the prophets are this touchstone:
> they, like a touchstone, say to the counterfeit coin,
> "Come, that by contact with me you may know in yourself
> that you are not worthy of either my higher or lower (states)."
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:2301 (heading), 2301–5; cf. MJR4 p.399*

See also: **ḥawāss al-bāṭin**.

1. *Qur'ān* 112:3.

wài ch'ì (wài qì) (C) *Lit.* outer *(wài)* breath *(ch'ì);* one of the two breaths *(ch'ì)* within the human body; *wài ch'ì* is the physical breath as opposed to the inner, subtle breath *(nèi ch'ì).* When conserved through various breathing practices, it is believed by many Taoists to improve health, lengthen life and contribute to the conservation of the inner *ch'ì,* which leads to enlightenment and immortality.

See also: **ch'ì**, **nèi ch'ì**.

wreath, **wreath of ether**, **wreath of Life** A wreath is an intertwined band of flowers and foliage, formed into a ring, usually placed on a grave as a remembrance, or worn on the head or hung up as a mark of honour or celebration. A metaphor used for the true spiritual estate of the soul, found especially in gnostic and allied literature.

The term is closely associated with the crown, a wreath often being worn in ancient times as a garland or crown of fragrant flowers upon the head, as in the early Christian *Odes of Solomon:*

> The Lord is upon my head like a crown (of flowers),
> and I shall never be without Him.
> A crown of Truth has been plaited for me,
> and it has caused Thy shoots to grow within me.
> For it is not like a withered crown which blossoms not:
> but Thou are alive upon my head,
> and Thou hast blossomed upon me.
> Thy fruits are full and perfect:
> they are full of Thy salvation.
>
> *Odes of Solomon 1:1–5*

The metaphor appears frequently in Mandaean texts. The "wreath of Life", for example, is said to come from the "world of light" to those who "love the Name of Truth":

> An earthly wreath fades,
> but the wreath of Life is fresh and living.
> The wreath of an elect righteous man is set,
> and shines on the heads of those
> who love the Name of Truth *(Kūshṭā).*
> The wreath is from the world of light
> and the robe from the everlasting abode.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 61, CPM p.51*

It is brought to the soul by a Saviour:

> A Saviour will come forth towards you
> (who) is all radiance and light from head to foot
> like the wreath in his Right Hand.
> And on his two arms is a robe.
> Bestir yourselves! Put on your robes!

> Put on your living wreaths, gird on your girdles,
> in which nothing is awry or blemished.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 67; cf. CPM p.54*

It is a "wreath of ether" – of subtle light and purity:

> The Being who brought me hither,
> who brought me that which was beautiful,
> put on me a robe, clothed me in a robe of radiance,
> he covered me in a wrapping of light.
> He set on (my head) a wreath of ether, and (gave me)
> of that which Life bestows on the *'uthras* (spirits).
> He set me up among the *'uthras,*
> and stood me up amidst the perfected (souls).
> A wreath of spirit he set on my head,
> and gloriously he brought me forth from the world.
> Life supported Life, Life found its own;
> Its own did Life find,
> and my soul found that for which it had looked.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 98; cf. CPM p.100*

See also: **robe**.

yeḥidah (He) *Lit.* union; a fifth level or aspect of man's soul according to the later Kabbalists and the *Ḥasidim.* Kabbalists such as Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed taught that the two additional stages of the soul – *ḥayyah* and *yeḥidah,* vitality and union – are beyond the three aspects discussed in the *Zohar* – *nefesh, ruaḥ* and *neshamah.* These two higher levels are experienced only by those individuals who have attained even higher levels of spiritual achievement than indicated by the development of *neshamah.*

See also: **ḥayyah, nefesh, neshamah, ruaḥ**.

yüén shén (yuán shén) (C) *Lit.* primal *(yüén)* spirit *(shén);* the spiritual consciousness which pervades the entire universe and dwells within each human being by virtue of their soul *(líng hún). Yüén shén* is usually concealed by *shíh shén* or the material, ordinary consciousness associated with thoughts, feelings and emotions. One who endeavours, however, to come into conscious awareness of *Tào,* through physical and spiritual practices, will eventually break the grip of *shíh shén,* and experience spiritual or primal consciousness, *yüén shén.*

See also: **líng hún**, **shén**, **shíh shén**.

ẓelem (He) *Lit.* image, likeness, form; an uncommon term used in *Genesis:*

> So God created man in His own image *(ẓelem),*
> in the image *(ẓelem)* of God created He him;
> Male and female created He them.
>
> *Genesis 1:27, KJV*

Because the Hebrew word *ẓelem* is so unusual, its meaning has been a source of speculation among Jewish commentators over the centuries. Some have understood this image to be the *neshamah* – the Breath, Spirit or divine Power that God 'breathed' into man at the time of creation. In *Genesis, nishmat* meaning 'breath of' is a contracted form of *neshamah:*

> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the Breath of Life *(Nishmat Ḥayyim);* and man became a living soul *(nefesh ḥayyah).*
>
> *Genesis 2:7, KJV*

Maimonides (1135–1204) interpreted God's image *(ẓelem)* to mean the divine, spiritual essence of man that originates in the *Logos*. Kabbalists interpreted the *ẓelem* as the Primal Adam – *Adam Kadmon* – the macrocosm, or first projection of the divine will, from which the entire creation was generated.

The term was also used in the Kabbalah for a covering that clothes the soul. In fact, the *Zohar* refers to a series of garments or bodies around the soul as it descends from "the holy King" to a life encased in matter. The *ẓelem* or garment of the soul is said to lie below the *nefesh* in the hierarchy of the soul's three aspects *(neshamah, ruaḥ, nefesh),* but to be higher than the body. The *Zohar*'s view is that a person needs to have a *ẓelem* in order to survive. The *ẓelem* accompanies the body from the time of birth, as it moves about in the world:

> When the spirits *(ruḥot)* (that have been assigned to human beings) leave their places, each spirit is attired before the holy King in precious garments, with the countenance that it is to bear in the lower world. And from the likeness *(dyukana),* the precious attire, comes the image *(ẓelem),* and it is third after the *ruaḥ,* and it comes early into the world (at the time of conception).
>
> *Zohar 3:104b, WZ2 p.770*

Here, the *Zohar* says that the *ẓelem* is itself derived from a higher garment, the *dyukana*. The Aramaic *dyukana* parallels the Hebrew *demut* which, like *ẓelem*, is also a term appearing in *Genesis:*

> This is the book of the generations of Adam (Man).
> In the day that God created mankind,
> in the likeness *(demut)* of God He made him.
>
> *Genesis 5:1, KB*

The *dyukana* or *ha-dyukana ha-kadosh* (the holy likeness) is often mentioned in the *Zohar*, where it refers to the garment of spiritual people that radiates a light similar to the light of God:

> Come and see. The men that do not sin before their Master, and do not transgress the commandments of the *Torah* – the radiance of their likeness *(dyukana)* does not vary from the supernal likeness *(dyukana)*, and every creature in the world goes in fear and trembling of them.
>
> *Zohar 1:71a, WZ2 p.771*

From these descriptions, it is possible that the *dyukana* refers to the astral body, and the *ẓelem* refers to the etheric (subtle physical) body, which is essential for physical existence, and which dies along with the gross material body.

See also: **ḥaluk** (5.2), **image of God**.

5.2 COSMIC PRINCIPLES

OBSERVING AND ANALYSING THE PHENOMENA of the physical creation, scientists have determined certain basic empirical rules by which the universe may be described and, to some extent, comprehended. The actual origins of these natural laws, however, remain a mystery. Why are there three observable dimensions to space and not two or four, or more? Why does light travel at the speed it does? Why does electricity behave in the way it does? What actually are electromagnetism and gravity? How are the bodies of living creatures so intricately and complexly organized? These and many other conundrums of physical life remain a mystery. Scientists can measure and describe – but they cannot provide fundamental answers to the nature of life and existence, and how it comes into being.

Mystics are fully aware of the limitations of the human mind and the physical senses to understand the deeper mysteries of creation. They know that the understanding which they derive from mystic experience cannot be conveyed in human language. Nevertheless, certain fundamental principles can to some extent be expressed, and in the many descriptions of creation, there are hints as to the nature of certain broad principles underlying the nature of manifestation and creation, both in this world and the heavenly regions. Some of these have been covered in Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 5.1. Others of a more general character are described here, while those specifically related to the soul's captivity in the creation are covered in Volume 6.

The key to intellectually understanding the ramifications of creation is provided by the mystics when they say that the Source of all – the Lord – is one and undivided, while His creation arises as patterns of multiplicity and diversity within the ocean of Himself. As regards the phenomena of this world, as well as those of the astral and causal realms, the architect of all this diversity is the universal mind. All the phenomena of this world – whether they are deemed a part of physics, chemistry, medicine, biology, evolution, psychology, sociology or any other branch of science – are ultimately related to the functioning of the greater mind, of which the human mind is only one small part.

It is because man generally ignores the higher principles of the nature and functioning of the mind – or glimpses them only rather vaguely when he turns his attention to ethical and moral considerations – that human science is not only so incomplete but, despite its enormous advancement, it is also so imperfect, and has led to destruction on a massive planetary scale. If man could see the higher laws at work governing the play of life in this world, he would automatically rein in the activities of his own mind, and behave more in harmony with the divine law.

It is a matter of considerable interest that while man prides himself on the use of his mind to understand the nature of the universe, he fails to understand the nature of that very mind by which he thinks he understands. His understanding, therefore, is related to a point of ignorance: he is quite ignorant of the nature and governing principles of the very means by which he tries to understand the world – his own mind.

This section covers some of the general principles in creation as outlined by the mystics, as well as traditional mythologies, cosmogonies and metaphysics.

KEY ENTRIES: **Adam Kadmon, guṇa, parẓufim, prakṛiti, pralaya, wŭ hsíng, yīn yáng, yuga.**

Adam Kadmon (He) *Lit.* Primal *(Kadmon)* Man *(Adam);* Primordial Man, Primal Adam, Cosmic Man. *Adam* means man, from the Hebrew *adamah* (earth), from *adom* (red), referring to the reddish colour of earth. Adam is portrayed in the Bible as the first, primeval human being, the father of all humanity. The story of Adam and Eve is generally understood to symbolize the fall of the soul from paradise, coming to live a life of hardship in this world. *Adam Kadmon* is a mythological and cosmic figure, an extension of the *Genesis* story, introduced to help understand how the creation has come into being. He is the macrocosmic man, his cosmic body being the origin of both the creation and man himself, who is the microcosm of creation, containing the entire creation in miniature. The rabbis taught that all the elements of creation come together in man, and through them he is linked to the rest of creation. This was expressed metaphorically and symbolically within a Jewish context:

> The body of man is a microcosm, the whole world in miniature, and the world in turn is a reflex of man. The hair upon his head corresponds to the woods of the earth, his tears to a river, his mouth to the ocean. Also, the world resembles the ball of his eye: the ocean that encircles the earth is like unto the white of the eye, the dry land is the iris, Jerusalem the pupil, and the Temple the image mirrored in the pupil of the eye.
>
> *"Man and the World", from Midrashic Sources, in LB p.26, LJCD*

Indian sacred literature describes the process of creation in a similar manner. In the *Purusha Sūkta* of the *Ṛig Veda,* the *Purusha* (Man) is portrayed as an archetypal Man, whose bodily parts form creation. The *Upaniṣhads* also say that *Brahman* contains the entire creation within Himself in seed form – as an archetype or as potential. From Him, the entire lower creation then comes into being. *Brahman* is thus the 'vessel' within which the creation below Him is manifested.

Adam Kadmon as the macrocosm and the spiritual archetype of man is also a way of indicating man's potential to become God. Because man is the microcosm, the whole of creation and God Himself is accessible to man within himself. It is in this sense that some of the rabbis interpreted the passage from *Genesis:*

> So God created man in His own image,
> in the image of God created He him;
> Male and female created He them.
>
> *Genesis 1:27, KJV*

Adam Kadmon is the "image" or microcosm in the sense that he epitomizes man's spiritual potential – to realize that his true self is identical to God – *is* God. Therefore, *Adam Kadmon* represents the actualization of human potential, the spiritually evolved human being.

In the thirteenth-century *Zohar,* the figure of *Adam Kadmon* is viewed as a metaphor for the realm of *azilut* (emanation), the highest realm in the hierarchy of creation. It is where the 'will to will' to create manifests as the first creative intention of the Godhead; where the *sefirot* (the successive emanations of the divine Essence) first become manifest. In this description, the various organs or parts of *Adam Kadmon*'s 'body' correspond to the different *sefirot.* It is a way of describing the activity and interrelationships of the *sefirot.*

According to the sixteenth-century Rabbi Isaac Luria, *Adam Kadmon* represents the spiritual realm above and preceding the emanation of the *sefirot.* Luria understood the *Adam Kadmon* to be equivalent to the level of *Ayn-Sof,* above the four created realms *('olamim)* of *azilut, briah, yezirah* and *'assiah.* Luria considered *Adam Kadmon* to be the first form taken by the projection of the primal divine Light, in which the potential of the *sefirot* exists undifferentiated and harmoniously. In fact, the activity of the *sefirot* is a reflection, at the level of emanation, of this higher level of *Adam Kadmon. Adam Kadmon* is thus the archetype, the pattern or divinely subtle blueprint or seed from which the entire creation was then projected.

Speaking metaphorically, Luria explained that creation came into being through the shining of the primal divine Light through the eyes, nose and ears of *Adam Kadmon.* The eyes of the body of the primal Adam represent the eyes through which God looks at the creation; they symbolize His divine creative light at play in the creation.

According to Luria, it was the action of the first ray of divine light *(kav ha-midah)* within the primordial vacuum of divine energy that created the Primordial Adam. Using the biblical story of Adam, Luria taught that the first form of the creation was this Primal Man or *Adam Kadmon,* within whom the entire creation came into existence. The Adam of the *Genesis* story was understood by the Lurianic Kabbalists to be a reflection on the physical plane of the real *Adam Kadmon* or Primal Man, who existed in the higher planes.

Adam Kadmon had a significant role, not only in Kabbalist doctrine, but also in ritual. Ritual was seen as a means of connecting man the microcosm to his macrocosmic counterpart, understood within a Jewish framework:

> In the minds of the early Kabbalists, the primary function of ritual was to establish a connection between man as a microcosm and the great world or Great Man, that is, *Adam Kadmon.* Undoubtedly the

idea of the microcosm, and especially in its implications for human conduct, played an enormous part in the conceptions of the Kabbalists. Long before the Kabbalah, the Talmudists played with the idea of a correspondence between the commandments of the *Torah* and the structure of man. Here, the 248 positive commandments correspond to the 248 members of man, and the 365 prohibitions to the 365 days of the year (or the 365 blood vessels in the body). Thus, each member of man's body was made to fulfil one of the commandments, and each day of the year to sanctify man through his self-restriction to the realm of the permissible.

The Kabbalists took up this conception and developed it. The Ten Commandments became for them the roots of a mystical structure expressed in the 613 commandments of the *Torah;* but this structure is identical with that of the mystical figure formed by the ten *sefirot* in the body of *Adam Kadmon.* Thus, man's action restores the structure of *Adam Kadmon,* which is at the same time the mystical structure of God as He reveals Himself. Just as the idea of the microcosm meant that because the world is wholly contained and reflected in man, he acts upon the world with direct magic, so the Kabbalistic conception implies the idea of a magical nexus which, however sublimated and spiritualized, is brought about magically by ritual. The old Jewish gnostics of the second or third century had spoken, to the horror of the medieval philosophers, of a 'body of the Godhead *(Shi'ur Komah)*' whose parts they even claimed they could measure. The Kabbalists took up this conception and identified it with *Adam Kadmon.* The Kabbalistic books of ritual repeatedly stress the connection between the commandments and this body of the Godhead.

Gershom Scholem, On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism, OKS pp.127–28

See also: **Ādam** (5.1), **parẓufim, purusha.**

aḍdād (A), **ażdād** (P) (sg. A. *ḍidd,* P. *żidd) Lit.* oppositions, opposites. The principle of opposition or duality is a governing force in creation. In Arabic philology, *ḍidd* means a word which has two opposite meanings, as in the verb *ṭariba* which means to excite to joy or sadness, and thus to be either happy or unhappy. Arabic philologists devoted many books to the study of the *aḍdād,* viewing them as a special category of homonyms (words pronounced or spelled in the same way but having different meanings).[1]

In Sufism, *aḍdād* is sometimes used to mean the principle of opposition or opposing elements. Rūmī observes that the entire world is a struggle between opposites. Only in the world of the spirit is there oneness and accord:

When you consider it, this world is in continuous war,
 atom with atom, like faith against infidelity.
One atom flies to the left, another to the right,
 one atom up, another down, seeking each other:
In this tendency, behold a war manifest.
This manifest war is the result of a hidden war:
 know that this discord springs from that.

Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:36–39; cf. MJR6 p.259

Numerous examples of pairs of opposites are found throughout Rūmī's work, both poetic and philosophical. Opposites are a fundamental means of explanation. "Things become clear through their opposites" is a proverb which he often quotes. These opposed pairs contrast the Real with the unreal, the relatively real with the relatively unreal, the permanent with the impermanent, and the lasting with the transient. He speaks of light and dark, spirit and body, higher mind *('aql)* and lower mind *(nafs),* ocean and foam, existence and nonexistence. In fact, Rūmī says that God created the dark side of things so that their lighter side may become apparent:

God created suffering and heartache,
 so that joy might be revealed by its opposite *(żidd).*
Hence, hidden things are manifest by their opposite *(żidd).*
But since God has no opposite *(żidd),* He remains hidden.
For the sight falls first upon light, then upon colour:
 an opposite *(żidd)* is made manifest by its opposite *(żidd),*
 like Greeks and Ethiopians!
So you have come to know light through its opposite *(żidd):*
 an opposite *(żidd)* reveals its opposite *(żidd)*
 in the process of manifestation.
The light of God has no opposite *(żidd)* in all existence,
 that it might be made manifest by its opposite *(żidd).*
Therefore, our "eyes see Him not, though He sees us".[2]

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1130–35; cf. MJR2 p.63, in SPL pp.49–50

However, Sufis also made the statement that in reality there is no *żidd;* there are no opposites. In reality there is none other than God, since there can be no thing that is opposite to Him. Rūmī describes how God, in all His oneness, wanted to be known. But by whom, since there was only Him? –

God, the Forgiver, decreed and willed in eternity
 to reveal and manifest Himself.
But no opposite *(żidd)* can be made known
 without its own opposite *(żidd),*
 and there was no opposite *(żidd)* to that peerless King.

So He made a viceroy, one with a heart (a Saint),
  that he might be a mirror of His kingship.
Then He endowed him with limitless purity,
  and then set up against him,
  an opposite in the form of darkness.
He made two banners, white and black:
The one was Adam, the other, the *Iblīs* (devil) of the Way.
Then strife and war came to pass
  between these two mighty camps.

Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:2151–56; cf. MJR6 p.378, in SPL p.62

In a sense, every thing, every word, contains opposite meanings *(ma'nī),* because only by comparing and contrasting a thing with some other thing can it be understood with mind or intellect *('aql).* Thus, mystics often use the same term to express opposite meanings, and the context must always be considered in understanding what is meant.

Rūmī, for example, often refers to this world as nonexistence *(nīstī),* since relative to the realms of Truth beyond human perception, this world is temporary and ephemeral. But he also frequently refers to eternity as Nonexistence, since God is beyond the existence He has brought about in His creation. He similarly uses the word existence *(hastī)* to refer to both realms in opposite contexts. The exception to this is God: He is the union of opposites *(jam'-i aẓdād),* and has no opposite.

Sleep and wakefulness are also two other instances of *aḍdād.* Mystics speak of the spiritually minded being asleep to this world and wakeful towards God. But the opposite meaning is conveyed when they say that the worldly minded are wakeful to the world and asleep to God.

See also: **duality, du'ī, dvaita, guṇa, al-ma'ná, yīn yáng**.

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1. See *"aḍdād",* in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, EI1* pp.184–85.
2. *Qur'ān* 6:103.

ages of classical Greece and Rome The division of time past, according to classical mythology, the fullest extant description being provided by Hesiod (C8th BCE); *viz.* the golden age, the silver age, the copper or bronze age and the iron age. The earth, it is said, began in a golden age, when life was easy and blissful. In his descriptions, H.A. Guerber draws largely on Hesiod:[1]

> The first mortals lived on earth in a state of perfect innocence and bliss. The air was pure and balmy; the sun shone brightly all the year; the earth brought forth delicious fruit in abundance; and beautiful,

> fragrant flowers bloomed everywhere. Man was content. Extreme cold, hunger, sickness, and death were unknown.
>
> *H.A. Guerber, Myths of Greece and Rome, MGR p.17*

But Zeus (Greek) or Jupiter (Roman), the king and ruler of all lesser gods, is displeased with the titan Promētheus for stealing fire from Mount Olympus. Zeus therefore decides to punish man, on whose account Promētheus had been so daring. In collaboration with the other gods, he creates the first woman, Pandora (*lit.* all-gifted), each god bestowing some special gift upon her to make her more attractive.

Zeus then sends Pandora with a jar, escorted by the winged messenger, Hermēs (Greek) or Mercury (Roman), as a gift for Epimētheus (*lit.* afterthought), the younger brother of Promētheus (*lit.* forethought). But because Promētheus has warned Epimētheus not to accept any gift from Zeus, Epimētheus declines the gift, making Zeus angrier than before. Zeus therefore chains Promētheus to a pillar in the Caucasian mountains where greedy vultures tear at his liver all day, every day. But at night, when it is bitterly cold, his liver becomes whole again. (And there he stays until rescued by Herculēs.)

Epimētheus, alarmed at his brother's fate, accepts and marries Pandora. But Pandora is a foolish, idle, but exceedingly beautiful woman and, out of curiosity, she opens the jar which Promētheus has warned Epimētheus to keep closed. As she opens it, out fly the sprites of all the trials and tribulations that plague mankind such as old age, sickness, vice, passion and so on, that had been imprisoned in it. First, they sting Epimētheus and Pandora, going on to attack mankind generally.

Last to emerge is Hope, interpreted by some as yet another contrivance of delusion, and by others as an agent of compassion. To begin with, Hope, epitomizing the power of good, even rules the day. But Pandora's fall to temptation ultimately brings about the end of the golden age.

During the golden age, man has "no occasion for labour":

> The first years of man's existence upon earth were years of unalloyed happiness. There was no occasion for labour, for the earth brought forth spontaneously all that was necessary for man's subsistence. "Innocence, virtue and truth prevailed; neither were there any laws to restrict men, nor judges to punish."
>
> *H.A. Guerber, Myths of Greece and Rome, MGR p.22*

But slowly, the golden age fades, giving place to the silver age when men have to labour for their living. The Roman poet, Ovid (*c.*43 BCE – 17 CE), describes it thus:

> Succeeding times a silver age behold,
> excelling brass, but more excell'd by gold.
> Then summer, autumn, winter, did appear,
> and spring was but a season of the year;
> The sun his annual course obliquely made,
> good days contracted, and enlarg'd the bad.
> Then air with sultry heats began to glow,
> the wings of winds were clogg'd with ice and snow;
> And shivering mortals into houses driv'n,
> sought shelter from th' inclemency of heaven.
> Those houses, then, were caves or homely sheds,
> with twinning osiers fenc'd, and moss their beds.
> Then ploughs, for seed, the fruitful furrows broke,
> and oxen labor'd first beneath the yoke.
>
> *Ovid, Metamorphoses 1:114–24, tr. Dryden, PD pp.388–89*

Guerber continues:

> Yet, in spite of these few hardships, the people were happy, far happier than their descendants during the age of brass, which speedily followed, when strife became customary, and differences were settled by blows.
>
> But by far the worst of all was the iron age, when men's passions knew no bounds, and they even dared refuse all homage to the immortal gods. War was waged incessantly; the earth was saturated with blood; the rights of hospitality were openly violated; and murder, rape and theft were committed on all sides.
>
> *H.A. Guerber, Myths of Greece and Rome, MGR p.23*

No one knows the origins of the Greek gods and myths. There are, however, some significant similarities between Greek and Indian mythologies. Both, for example, share the same classification of time into four ages, termed *yugas* in Sanskrit and Hindi. In fact, it seems most likely that both Greek and Indian mythology were influenced by the same early Iranian culture whose language is related to both Sanskrit and Greek. If language elements are shared between cultures, then it is fair to presume that there will be a sharing of social practices and religious beliefs, as well.

Some writers of antiquity, including Plato, believed that the Greek gods began as an allegorical way of describing the nature of creation.[2] But in the manner of all good folklore and mythology, they soon developed distinct characters of their own in the popular mind, and were cast as the heroes in many new stories having no spiritual basis at all.

See also: **gods** (4.2), **yuga**.

1. Hesiod, *Works and Days* 109–226, *HHH* p.10*ff.*
2. *e.g.* Plato, *Republic* 2:378d–e; Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* V:4, 9; *Clementine Homilies* IV:24; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* V:2–3, VI:14; Eustathius, *Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*.

akashic records A record in the higher worlds said to contain the past history of the planet, and which, it is claimed, can be read by clairvoyants and mystics. A term coined by the Russian, Madame H.P. Blavatsky (1831–1891), one of the founders of theosophy. The Theosophical Society was established in 1875, and its beliefs and tenets were said to be taken from the sacred writings of Brahmanism and Buddhism. The term is therefore commonly assumed to be of Buddhist origin. However, it does not appear in any Buddhist or Hindu texts.

In the gross physical universe, *ākāsha* (space, ether) is the matrix of spatial energy within which all physical substance arises. It is a real, formative sea of energy, part of the greater aspects of the mind. All patterns in the gross physical universe form like bubbles within this akashic ocean of physical space. It also has a peculiar feature. It *remembers* all that has been manifested through it. It is this memory which is called the akashic records.

The same principle is true at every level of creation, for each realm is manifested out of its own 'sky', *sunna* (void) or *ākāsha.* At the gross physical level, this memory is experienced as the atmosphere or vibration of a place, something which remains even when all the people have departed, taking their personal auras and vibrations with them.

Similarly, at the subtle physical akashic level, every individual has his own personal record of everything that is going to happen and has happened to him. It is known to everyone as *memory.* Everything that is done, said, desired, thought or perceived with the senses originates in the individual mind, and leaves its mark thereon. All this lies in the area that Indian mystics call the 'sky' of the physical body *(chidākāsha).*

It is a common experience that access to one's own memory is greatly limited. Much of it, though still present as patterns in the subconscious mind, contributing to the actions and attitudes of the individual, remains forgotten. Everyone has great difficulty dealing with the fluidity and ever shifting nature of their own mental processes and in 'reading' their inner akashic scroll correctly. Very little of the daily happenings that make up a person's life gets remembered, even of the last few days or hours, though it has all left its mark. Old people sometimes comment that memories of quite inconsequential events have come back to them, but which they had never previously recalled or had not remembered for many years. Similarly, the saying that all the memories of a lifetime pass before the mind of a drowning man is not without foundation. It has been the experience of some of those who have had near-death experiences.[1]

It can be imagined, therefore, how it must be with those people who are both partially psychic and yet have a normal human mind packed full of a mixture of images, ideas, emotions and a multitude of experiences. If such individuals do reach into some subastral zone or even go adventuring within the realm of their own human psyche, the sheer fluidity and tenuous subtlety of their personal mind when attempting to read the records of the greater mind will produce almost any imaginable series of bizarre impressions. Mind is acting within itself in a shifting sea of subtle vibration, and more or less anything could (and does) happen.

This is true of all those who claim to have 'read' the akashic records. Such reading is not like the seemingly objective consultation of an encyclopaedia, but is a psychic experience within the subtle energies of the individual's mind. It is like trying to recall the details or the memory of something which happened long ago. But the process is infinitely more liable to error because of the dreamlike nature of the subtle realms of the mind, and because the 'reader' may be largely unfamiliar with the nature of the inner mental geography.

The Austrian mystic and educationalist Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), originally a theosophist, later founding anthroposophy, wrote extensive material that he claimed was based upon his reading of the akashic records. But he himself acknowledges the great difficulty he had in getting accurate information. In *Occult Science,* Steiner describes vast cycles of time in which the earth begins in a spiritualized condition, and descends to a materialized state. The idea is very similar to the ages of ancient Greece and Rome, and the *yugas* of Indian mythology. But he admits to great difficulty in perception because of the radical and increasing difference between the mental atmosphere of the present times and those of past ages. Calling the last four of these cycles the Saturn, the Sun, the Moon and the Earth (the present) periods, he writes:

> The difficulty is, however, undeniably great for those planetary conditions which precede the Moon embodiment. For the conditions of the Moon period still show a certain likeness to those of the Earth, and in attempting to describe them, these similarities with the present day give one a point of contact and enable one to express in clear ideas what has been supersensibly perceived.
>
> It is a very different matter when we come to describe the Saturn and Sun evolutions. What confronts the clairvoyant observer here is as different as possible from the things and beings that now belong to the horizons of man's life. This makes it exceedingly difficult even

> to bring the corresponding facts into the domain of supersensible consciousness at all. But since the present human being cannot be understood without going back to the Saturn state, some description of it must nonetheless be given. And the description will not be misunderstood if it is borne in mind that the difficulty exists, and that many of the things here said are to be taken not so much as an exact description, but more as a hint and indication of the facts.
>
> *Rudolf Steiner, Occult Science, OS pp.111–12*

1. *e.g.* Raymond A. Moody, *Life After Life, LAL* pp.64–73; Melvin Morse, *Closer to the Light, CL* pp.34, 161.

ākhir al-zamān (A), **ākhir-i zamān** (P) *Lit.* end *(ākhir)* of time *(zamān);* eschatology; doctrines associated with the end of the world, including beliefs about the state of souls who have died and are awaiting the final end of time *(ākhir al-zamān).* A belief in the resurrection of physical bodies is a tenet of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In Islam, souls are believed to live in the tomb awaiting Judgment Day; they are believed to be in a *barzakh* (intermediate stage) waiting to learn what their judgment will be.

When mystics speak of the Day of Judgment or the end of time, they are generally referring to the day of a person's death. This is an inevitable day, they point out, which all souls will definitely have to face.

See also: **ba'th** (▸2), **resurrection** (▸2), **Yawm al-Dīn** (▸2), **Yawm al-Qiyāmah** (▸2).

'Amā', al- (A/P) *Lit.* heavy clouds, deep clouds, the dark mist; a term originating in a *ḥadīth* (traditional saying). When Muḥammad was asked: "Where was our Lord before He created creation?", he replied, "In deep clouds." Al-Qāshānī explains the term as referring to the God's own intrinsic veil of majesty:

> In our view, it is the Presence of Oneness *(al-Ḥaḍrah al-Aḥadīyah)* because no one knows it except God, for He is in the veil of Majesty *(ḥijāb al-Jalāl).*
>
> *Al-Qāshānī, Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Ṣūfīyah 395, GST p.124*

However, he also notes that there are alternative interpretations. According to one point of view, he says, *al-'Amā'* refers to the veil separating the oneness of God from the plurality of the creation. But al-Qāshānī then refutes this on the grounds that the *ḥadīth* speaks of God being "in deep clouds" *before* the creation ever came into being. *Al-'Amā'* therefore pre-existed creation.

Another possibility, al-Qāshānī continues, is that by "creation" Muḥammad meant only the physical world, which is manifested after the higher levels of creation. In which case, he says, *al-'Amā'* would refer to the First *Barzakh* (Isthmus), the first 'entification' of the Divine in His manifestation of the creation. This barrier or *barsakh* of *al-'Amā'* is said to lie either between *wāḥidīyah* (the realm of the origin of the *Logos,* from which comes the multiplicity of creation) and the planes below it, or between *aḥadīyah* (a higher level of absolute Oneness, beyond even the source of multiplicity) and all creation below.

See also: **barzakh** (4.1), **dhundhūkār**, **tohu va-bohu.**

apocatastasis (Gk) *Lit.* full restoration; the state, condition, 'moment' or 'period' when creation, including all the heavens and hells, ceases to exist and only the absolute Reality or the supreme Lord remains. Since time is also a part of His creation, this condition cannot really be called either a moment or a period, though for convenience it is frequently referred to as such. After some 'time', creation is again manifested.

In ancient times, the doctrine was associated with the Greek Stoic philosophers and was adopted by Christianity. Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Gregory of Nyssa were among the early Christians who upheld the idea, though there was by no means universal agreement on its interpretation. To Origen, *apocatastasis* simply meant salvation, for he believed that the creation was eternal, and that there would be no Last Day. It is for this reason that the doctrine did not become a part of Christian dogma, for with no fear of a Day of Judgment, there would – thought the Christian authorities, especially of the early Eastern Church – be no incentive to strive for salvation. Consequently, the doctrine was not made general knowledge.

In Judaism, *apocatastasis* means the return of all creation to the one Source. In the Hindu sacred literature, the periods of creation and dissolution *(pralaya)* are spelled out precisely in the *Purāṇas,* and have been mentioned by many Indian mystics throughout the ages. In Islam, there is a saying, often quoted as a *ḥadīth* (traditionally accepted saying of Muḥammad), which reads:

> God alone was and with Him nothing was;
> And He is now as He was.
>
> *Ḥadīth, in CEI p.44*

There is also a story, related among the Sufis, that 'Alī went in search of Muḥammad, who had left a group of his close disciples to go and sit in meditation. 'Alī found the Prophet sitting in meditation in a grove, and conversed with him for some time before returning to the Companions. On the way, he met 'Umar who asked what the Prophet had been saying. On hearing the answer, 'Umar said that these words should not be made common knowledge or else people would give up striving for salvation. And, indeed, the words never were recorded, leaving a mystery that many Muslims have tried to unravel.

The general interpretation often given is that the Prophet indicated that all Muslims are saved, regardless of their actions. But some Sufis hold that he was speaking of *apocatastasis*. But perhaps what this story really symbolizes is that in times past there were many aspects of a mystic's teachings which were kept secret.

See also: **pralaya**.

'araḍ (A), **'araż** (P) *Lit.* accident; accidental, contingent, nonessential characteristic; contrasted with *jawhar* (substance). The distinction between substance and accident has its roots in Greek philosophy. An *'araḍ* (accident) has no existence apart from the *jawhar* (substance) to which it belongs. Examples of an *'araḍ* would be colour, quality, motion, rest and so on. These only exist when they are associated with a substance *(jawhar);* they cannot exist by themselves.

See also: **jawhar**.

ará-kañi (G) *Lit.* fleeing of the light; the end of the world; a pervasive theme of South American Guaraní religion is the apocalyptic destruction of the world. As one of the Avá-Chiripá, a subgroup of the Guaraní, explained:

> The Sun will disappear and then there will be nothing for us to do on this earth. This will be the moment of the *ará-kañi.* This will be our last day, the (last) time that we shall see this earth.
>
> *Avá-Chiripá Myth, in SAC p.118*

The Guaraní believe they can hasten the time of *ará-kañi* by engaging in wrong actions such as eating meat. These wrong actions increase a person's load of imperfections *(tekó-achy),* and the soul gets heavier and heavier, so that it cannot fly to the land without evil *(ywy mará ey).* Only the Saviours, the great shamans, can save man from the fate of *ará-kañi.* These Saviours have achieved spiritual perfection *(agüyjé)*. Because they know the way to the land without evil, these Saviours can teach their disciples how to go there also.

With the Spanish conquest, the Avá-Chiripá group of Guaraní fell away from the rules of their Saviours. They increased their store of imperfections by eating meat and breaking other moral or religious laws. In their despair, they envisioned the apocalyptic end of the earth, the *ará-kañi.*

Messianic teachings of the end of the world are common among South America's various religions. As Lawrence Sullivan explains in *Icanchu's Drum,* some prophets see the end of the world through eyes of despair, while others see beyond the destruction to the return of a lost paradise. The Avá-Chiripá and other Guaraní groups describe both scenarios. The *ará-kañi* expresses despair, while the hopeful culmination of things is the migration to the land without evil *(ywy mará ey)*.[1]

Myths of past apocalypses also abound in South American religions. Lawrence Sullivan calls the violent destruction of the primordial world "the most important event in South American mythic history".[2] Accounts of cosmic destruction involve fire, flood, the sky falling, and absolute darkness obscuring everything. The Avá-Chiripá themselves have myths that describe the earth being destroyed by floods and fires. Other South American cultures describe multiple universes, each with its own destruction. Other cultures, for example, the Campa, believe that the universe has been created, destroyed and recreated many times.

Belief both in past apocalyptic destruction and messianic future destruction – the end of the world and the Day of Judgment – can be found in many of the worlds religions, including Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Mystics of India, on the other hand, describe a cyclic creation and dissolution *(pralaya)* of the universe.

See also: **ywy mará ey** (4.1).

1. L.E. Sullivan, *Icanchu's Drum, ID* pp.571–72.
2. L.E. Sullivan, *Icanchu's Drum, ID* p.49.

avyakta (S/H) *Lit.* not *(a)* manifest *(vyakta);* unmanifest, invisible, imperceptible, out of sight, indistinct, not apparent, unknown; also, unclear; hence, mysterious; the unmanifested form of anything. *Brahman,* for example, is said to be unmanifest and formless. Hence, Kṛishṇa, as the personification of *Brahman,* says in the *Bhagavad Gītā:*

> The entire universe is pervaded by me,
> the unmanifested *(avyakta)* Being.

> All beings subsist in me,
> but I do not dwell in them.
> *Bhagavad Gītā 9:4; cf. BGT*

All diversity in this world and the higher regions is manifested out of this formless Unmanifest. Hence, speaking of the cycles of creation according to Indian thought, Kṛishṇa says:

> At the dawn of time,
> the entire universe is manifest out of the Unmanifest *(Avyakta).*
> When night falls,
> it dissolves again into the Unmanifest *(Avyakta).*
> *Bhagavad Gītā 8:18; cf. BGT*

Avyakta is also used in the sense of mysterious. Hence, Kṛishṇa counsels Arjuna not to grieve over the loss of friends and relatives in the forthcoming battle:

> Mysterious *(avyakta)* is the origin of beings.
> Mysterious *(avyakta)* too is their end.
> Only in the period between birth and death
> are they manifested *(vyakta)* clearly.
> This being the case, why all the grief?
> *Bhagavad Gītā 2:28; cf. BGT*

See also: **akshara Avyakta** (2.1).

boẓina di-kardinuta (Am) *Lit.* spark *(boẓina)* of *(di)* blackness *(kardinuta);* lamp of darkness; used in the *Zohar* to describe the standard of measure *(kav ha-midah)* which fixes size and measurement among the *sefirot* (divine emanations); part of the complex imagery used in the *Zohar* to describe the way in which the first processes of emanation began. *Boẓina di-kardinuta* is the element or quality that limits, orders or channels the outflowing of the divine will, light or power. It is the prism that separates the light of *Ayn-Sof* (the Infinite) into its component colours or aspects, the *sefirot,* so that it can flow into the creation in an orderly, channelled fashion.

The *boẓina di-kardinuta* is emanated from within the *Ayn-Sof* and is hidden within the will-less will (the first *sefirah* of *Keter* or *Ayin*). Once the primal will emanates from *Keter,* it activates the emanations concealed within it, and thus begins the process of emanation. The *Zohar* explains:

> "In the Beginning … ":[1] At the very beginning, the King *(i.e. Ayn-Sof)* made engravings in the supernal Purity. A spark of blackness

> *(boẓina di-kardinuta)* emerged in the sealed within the sealed, from the mystery of *Ayn-Sof,* a mist within matter, implanted in a ring, no white, no black, no red, no yellow, no colour at all.
>
> When He measured with the standard of measure *(kav ha-midah),* He made colours to provide light. Within the spark, in the innermost part, emerged a source, from which the colours below are painted. And it is sealed among the sealed things of the mystery of *Ayn-Sof.* It penetrated, but did not penetrate, its air ('space'). It was not known at all, until from the pressure of its penetration a single Point shone, sealed, supernal. Beyond this Point, nothing is known, and so it is called *Reshit* (Beginning): the first Word of all.
>
> *Zohar 1:15a; cf. WZ1 p.309*

With this complex imagery, the *Zohar* describes the very beginning of emanation: how the primal divine Essence bestirs itself from its state of total concealment, beyond any need, desire or will to project itself into the creation. The black spark, the spark of blackness, provides a sense of that first glimmer, the first beginning of the spiral of existence. This is prior to the "Beginning *(Reshit)*". From the point created by its initial sparking comes *Reshit.* This is the first Word, the first Utterance or stirring of the Voice of God, the beginning of the radiant emanations of the primal divine Light. The "standard of measure" breaks up that Light into its component colours or qualities, so that it can flow into the creation in an orderly fashion.

1. *Genesis* 1:1.

Brahmachakra (S/H) *Lit.* wheel *(chakra)* of *Brahman (Brahma);* a symbol of the creation found in the *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad.* Every motion or change within the realm of *Brahman* functions as a cycle. All existence is said to take place on the great wheel of eighty-four *(chaurāsī),* the 8,400,000 categories of life. The *yugas* (ages) flow cyclically; the dissolution *(pralaya)* and re-creation of the universe are a cycle. Day follows night; the seasons rotate; electrons orbit the nuclei of atoms; planets go around the sun; and stars circle the centres of galaxies. Reproduction functions in a cycle as the young of any species become the adults, giving birth to future generations. Physiological and biochemical processes are cyclic and repetitive. Even social and economic changes follow a cyclic basis. Everything, from the vast to the microscopic, functions in a cyclic manner.

The reason is simple. The three strands of which all *māyā* – diversity and illusion – is created are the three threads of the *guṇas,* the primary attributes of creation. They are *rajas* (which brings things into being), *sattva* (which maintains them in existence), and *tamas* (which underlies their decay or dissolution). This is one of nature's fundamental principles.

The *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* describes this Wheel, expanding upon the metaphor by depicting the various aspects of the manifestation process as the various functional parts of the great Wheel. It begins by stating that the sages actually saw this Wheel in operation. They rose up to the level of *Brahman,* and experienced the manner by which the creation of all the worlds of *Brahman* is organized, seeing Him as a Wheel

> with one outer rim, three tyres, sixteen end parts,
> fifty spokes with twenty counter-spokes,
> and six sets of eight, …
> moving on three different roads by means of one belt,
> which is single yet manifold,
> and whose one illusion arises from two causes.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 1:4*

The essential outer framework of this Wheel, its "outer rim", is *māyā.* Everything in the realms of *Brahman* is a projection of this force. The "three tyres" of which this rim of *māyā* is comprised are the three *guṇas.* The "sixteen end parts" are the five *tattvas,* the ten *indriyas* (the five organs of sensory perception and the five modes of action), and the *manas* or mind. The original meaning of the "fifty spokes with twenty counter-spokes, and six sets of eight" is obscure, and various interpretations have been given by commentators, ancient and modern. Swāmī Nikhilānanda interprets the "fifty spokes" as:

> the five misconceptions, or different kinds of ignorance or doubt, described by Patañjali as ignorance, self-love, attachment, hatred and clinging to life;[1] the twenty-eight disabilities *(ashaktis),* which are the causes of misconception; the nine inversions of satisfactions *(tushṭis),* the eight inversions of perfections *(siddhis).*[2]
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, on Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 1:4, U2 p.75*

The twenty counter-spokes, he interprets as the ten *indriyas* and their ten corresponding focuses of attention – sight and the visual field, hearing and the auditory field, and so on. The "six sets of eight" are

> explained as the octad of *prakṛiti* (namely, *ākāsha,* air, fire, water and earth, mind, *buddhi* and I-consciousness); that of the *dhātu,* or bodily substance (skin, cuticle, flesh, blood, fat, bone, marrow and semen); the eight supernatural powers *(siddhis),* endowed with which a man can make himself as small as an atom, huge as a mountain, light as air, can reach any object he likes, rule everything he wants, conquer

> everything, and fulfil all desires; the octad of the *bhāvas* or states (righteousness or *dharma,* knowledge or *jñāna,* renunciation, majesty, unrighteousness, ignorance, non-renunciation and poverty); the octad of gods and incorporeal beings (*Brahmā, Prajāpati,* deities, *gandharvas, yakshas, rākshasas, pitṛis,* fiends); and the octad of virtues (compassion, forgiveness, absence of malice, purity, absence of effort, goodness, liberality and absence of longing).
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, on Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 1:4, U2 p.75*

The "one belt" or rope driving everything is described as that of love, by which everything is connected. It is also the one rope of desire, the debased form of love operating in the universe, by which souls are kept on the Wheel. It may also refer to the creative Power of *Om* which emanates from *Brahman,* creating and supporting all below. The "three roads" or paths upon which the Wheel moves are possibly those of evil, virtue and the mystic path, while the "two causes" of illusion are the two sides of the coin of duality, out of which all diversity comes into being.

There have been a number of interpretations of the details of this image, but the central fact remains the same – that the Wheel of the universe is said to proceed from and remain within the sphere of *Brahman.* It is such descriptions of diversity and function within the orbit of *Brahman* which have led Saints to say that *Brahman* is actually what they have designated the universal mind – the source of the three *guṇas,* of *māyā* and all the other ramifications of the greater mind.

The *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* continues:

> In this vast wheel of *Brahman (Brahmachakra),*
> in which all things live and die,
> the soul (*haṃsa, lit.* swan) is tossed about,
> so long as it regards the self as separate from the Mover.
> (Only) when blessed by Him, does it attain immortality.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 1:6*

That is, the soul remains lost and wandering about on the wheel of birth and death until it realizes its identity with the supreme Lord, the "Mover". Later in this *Upanishad,* the writer returns to the same topic:

> Some learned men speak of inherent nature,
> and others of time (as the cause of the universe).
> They are deluded.
> It is the greatness of the effulgent One
> by which the wheel of *Brahman (Brahmachakra)* revolves.

> He by whom the entire universe is forever enfolded
> is the Knower, the author of time,
> the possessor of qualities, the all-wise.
> At His command the work (of creation),
> which is perceived as earth, water, fire, air and *ākāsha,* unfolds.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 6:1–2*

See also: **chakra** (5.1), **guṇa**.

1. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 2:3.
2. *Sānkhya Sūtras* 3:38–40.

causation The relationship of cause and effect. Three factors are fundamental to the structure and organization of the physical universe: (i) space, (ii) time, and (iii) causation. The three are closely interlinked. Events take place in space, spun out over time – short or long. Further, the present state of something is directly related to its previous state. The present arises out of the past. The past can therefore be described as the cause of the future. Causation is thus intimately linked with space and time. Consequently, all three are a part of one system and are intrinsic, interdependent aspects of this world. These three basic factors contain all the ingredients that go to make up the external manifestation of the law of *karma* in this world.

Behind the scenes, the physical universe is run by the mind. It is an expression of the mind. In fact, time and space – and their product, causation – have their first beginnings in the subtlest of forms, in the universal mind. The mind is the great divider of the One into the many. Where there is One, there can be no causation, because there is no differentiation and no action. There is also neither time nor space, for both imply differentiation of the One into 'here and there' (space), 'now and then' (time) and 'this proceeding from that' (causation). As soon as there is differentiation, there is automatically time, space and causation. At the highest level of the universal mind, time, space and causation are manifested in a highly subtle form. Time itself appears to be much 'longer', being a subtle reflection of eternity. Similarly, with space and causation.

In this world, all action among living creatures proceeds from the individual minds of those creatures, human or otherwise. Without mental activity, there is no action. It is by this means that they pass through their destiny *karma.* There is always a motivation or some underlying intention for activity, however fleeting or instinctive it may be. At the same time, among human beings, all thoughts and desires are etched and impressed into the mind, as seeds for the future.

The origin of causation, therefore, is the universal mind; the expression of causation at the physical level is known as the law of *karma;* and the power that creates, administers and integrates all that happens within the realms of causation is the greater mind. The mind is the architect of all diversity and change within its realms, though the prime mover and source of power or energy remains the divine creative power – the Creative Word or divine Sound. This is true in every field of study. Whether it is physics, geology, astrophysics, physiology, evolution of life forms, or whether it is human psychology, animal behaviour, ethics, morality or simply the way things happen in daily life – the mind, together with its servants of time, space and causation, is always intimately involved.

See also: **karma** (6.3).

chāryug(a) (H/Pu), **chār jug** (Pu) *Lit.* four *(chār)* ages *(yugas);* the cycle of the four *yugas* or ages, according to traditional Vedic and Hindu teaching.

See **yuga**.

ch'ì (qì) (C) *Lit.* breath; hence, life force. In Taoism, from a cosmological standpoint, *ch'ì* refers to the 'breath' which gives energy to all life and emanates from the original, primordial breath or *yüén ch'ì. Yüén ch'ì* is the vital force of creation, which at the time the cosmos was created was divided into *T'iēn* (Heaven) and *Tì* (Earth), and then ultimately into all dualistic phenomena of creation through the complementarity of *yīn* and *yáng.* The classical Taoist text, *Huái Nán Tzu* says that things come into being from nonbeing as a result of *Tào* (the Great Beginning). *Tào* gave birth to the cosmos with the emanation of material force or *ch'ì:*

> Before Heaven and Earth had taken form, all was vague and amorphous. Therefore, it was called the Great Beginning. The Great Beginning produced emptiness and emptiness produced the universe. The universe produced material force *(ch'ì)* which had limits. That which was clear and light drifted up to become Heaven, while that which was heavy and turbid solidified to become Earth. It was very easy for the pure, fine material to come together, but extremely difficult for the heavy, turbid material to solidify. Therefore, Heaven was completed first, and Earth assumed shape after. The combined essences of Heaven and Earth became the *yīn* and *yáng;* the concentrated essences of the *yīn* and *yáng* became the four seasons; and the scattered essences of the four seasons became the myriad creatures of the world.
>
> *Huái Nán Tzu 3:ia, SCT pp.192–93*

The active aspect of *Tào* in the physical universe is expressed by the principle of *té*, through the manifested aspects of *ch'ì* and *yīn yáng*. These interact through the triune relationship of Heaven *(T'iēn)*, Earth *(Tì)* and man *(jén)*, as well as the five agents or elements *(wǔ hsíng)* to fashion the myriad forms of matter. Lǎo Tzu says:

> *Tào* generates one;
> One generates two;
> Two generates three;
> Three generates the ten thousand things *(wàn wù)*.
> All things are backed by shade *(i.e. yīn)*,
>   and faced by light *(i.e. yáng)*,
>   and harmonized by the immaterial breath *(ch'ì)*.
>
> *Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 42*

Each living thing and every particle of creation has *ch'ì* which provides energy and life force.

See also: **ch'ì** (5.1), **Tào** (3.1), **té**, **wǔ hsíng**, **yīn yáng**.

dhundhūkār (H/Pu), **dhundhūkārā** (Pu) *Lit.* gloom, darkness, haziness; profound darkness, utter darkness; misty chaos; an evocative term used to depict the pre-creation state of God absorbed within Himself in profound meditation. A nineteenth-century Indian mystic, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, writes:

> In the beginning, there was *dhundhūkār*. The Lord *Purush* was still in *sunn samādhi* (absorbed within Himself). Until then, there was no creation. When His will surged, *Shabd* became manifest and brought into being the whole of creation; first *sat lok* and then, by the *kalā* (skill, power) of *Sat Purush*, the three worlds and all the rest of creation were brought into being.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 2:30; cf. SB p.59*

Similarly, Guru Nānak says:

> For good many ages *(yugas)*, there was all-darkness,
>   and the infinite and illimitable Lord was seated in trance.
> The Lord sat all alone in inky darkness
>   *(dhundhūkār nirālam,* pitch darkness),
>   and the world of strife was not in existence then.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1026, MMS*

And:

> For countless ages, there was utter darkness *(dhundhūkārā):*
> there was no earth and no sky,
> but the infinite Lord's will alone was pervasive.
> There was neither day, nor night, nor moon, nor sun,
> but the Lord alone sat in profound trance *(sunn samādhi).*
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1035, MMS*

See also: **tohu va-bohu**.

Dṛishṭi-sṛishṭi-vād(a) (S/H) *Lit.* the theory *(vāda)* that seeing *(dṛishṭi)* creates *(sṛishṭi)* (the world); the idea that the world exists due to its being seen or perceived. *Dṛishṭi-sṛishṭi-vāda* is a later Vedantic theory according to which it is the perception of its perceivers which creates the world. It is thus thought to have no independent reality of its own. It is maintained that the world is not a cosmic manifestation or projection of *Brahman* (which most *Advaita* Vedantists believe), but is only an appearance created by the individual souls *(jīvas)* inhabiting it. These *jīvas* are themselves nothing but seeming or apparent diversifications of the undifferentiated, pure consciousness known as *Ātman* or *Brahman,* and as a consequence of this division are infected with spiritual ignorance *(avidyā* or *ajñāna).* This theory is discussed at some length in the *Vedānta-siddhānta-muktāvalī* of Prakāshānanda (1550–1650 CE).

In simple terms, it can be said that *Advaita* Vedantists contend that *Brahman* alone is eternal and true, and that the creation is a reflection of *Brahman. Dṛishṭi-sṛishṭi-vāda* adds that the visible world, the forms that are seen and the names that are given to those forms are all the result of the mind's activities. The mind creates them and the mind perceives them. Thus, all that is perceived as matter is within the orbit of the mind.

The idea is very similar to the subjective idealism of the Irish philosopher and Anglican bishop, George Berkeley (1685–1753), who propounded the view of "*esse est percipi* (to be is perception)". That is, existence consists in perceiving, and hence the world has no reality independent of those who perceive it. It is somewhat similar to solipsism, according to which the only thing that can be known and verified with certainty is one's own existence, *i.e.* one's own mind.

Material objects, Berkeley asserted, do not exist, *per se.* The universe continues to exist, even in the absence of perceivers, because it is always perceived by God. Ultimately, it is God's perception of it which sustains the universe. Berkeley thus takes the position that all reality is mental. This idea is neatly summarized in two limericks by Ronald Knox:

There was a young man who said, "God
must think it exceedingly odd,
if He finds that this tree
continues to be
when there's no one about in the quad."

REPLY:

"Dear Sir,

Your astonishment's odd:
I am always about in the quad.
And that's why the tree
will continue to be
since observed by –

Yours faithfully,

God."

Ronald Knox, in HWP p.623

Mystics have always pointed out that the intellect is an inadequate tool for understanding the universe. In fact, theories that intellectual people feel are conflicting, often seem quite compatible from a mystic point of view because they are understood as describing the same reality from different points of view. According to mystics, theories are, at best, only partial descriptions of a reality which can only be truly known by mystic experience.

In the case of *Dṛishṭi-sṛishṭi-vāda,* it is correct and demonstrable that all sensory perceptions of the universe are experienced within the minds of the individuals. In fact, the entire physical universe, since it consists of sensory perceptions, can be understood as lying within the minds of its inhabitants. The greater aspects of the mind are thus involved in the processes of creation and its organization, something with which Indian mystics would agree. But how this comes about can only be truly understood by inner experience. No amount of intellectual or theological theorizing can ever prove or adequately describe any particular theory of existence.

Two further aspects of this way of thinking are worth considering. Firstly, according to mystical understanding, all creatures have a mind. All creatures are therefore to be included as inhabitants or perceivers of the universe. These creatures, however, perceive the universe in an exceptionally wide variety of ways. Bats perceive a sonar world, sharks perceive the electrical nerve impulses of their potential prey, some creatures live largely by smell, and so on. What, then, is the nature of the 'real world', when all creatures perceive it so differently? Does it have any objective existence apart from the perceptions of its participating living creatures?

Secondly, the bodies and associated destiny occupied by the individual minds and souls of each creature are allocated according to the *karma* of each individual. But *karma* itself is recorded in, and its outworking administered by, the processes of the higher mind. Consequently, however it is described intellectually, mystics agree that the mind is intricately involved with the way in which the creation is manifested.

duality The quality or state of being in two parts, of having two aspects; one of the primary characteristics of material existence. Everything in this world has its opposite. Every coin of life and existence has two sides. There is good and bad, light and dark, high and low, birth and death, and a great deal more. In science, there is a plus and a minus in everything – electricity, magnetism and so on. This duality has its roots in the great power that first divides the oneness of the Spirit into multiplicity – the universal mind.

God is one, an ocean of being or consciousness. The soul, merged in Him, experiences this divine oneness. But when it enters the sphere of the mind, the mind creates the illusion of separateness, of subject and object, of knower and known. This is the source of all duality, prevalent throughout all the worlds of the mind. In the highly subtle realms of the universal mind, duality is refined, and a powerful though illusory sense of oneness still prevails. But as the soul descends, the sense of separation increases until, in the physical universe, the soul becomes entangled with an individual mind, and is imprisoned in a physical body. Here, duality appears as the fundamental characteristic of nature. The illusion of separation is complete.

Many mystics have spoken of this feature of physical existence. The Greek mystic, Heraclitus (*c*.535–475 BCE), describes material life as a tension of opposites:

> Opposition brings concord.
> Out of discord comes the fairest harmony.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 98, HPW p.90*

Again, speaking of the ebb and flow created by these opposites:

> It is by disease that health is pleasant;
> By evil that good is pleasant;
> By hunger, satiety;
> By weariness, rest.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 99, HPW p.90*

And again:

Everything flows and abides:
  everything gives way and nothing stays fixed.
You cannot step twice into the same river,
  for other waters are continually flowing on.

Heraclitus, Fragments 20–21, HPW p.29

The gnostic writer of the *Gospel of Philip* also observes that duality is woven into the fabric of material life. Nothing exists by itself alone, but only in conjunction with its opposite:

Light and darkness, life and death, right and left,
  are brothers of one another.
They are inseparable.
Because of this, neither are the good good,
  nor the evil evil, nor is life life, nor death death.
For this reason, each one will dissolve
  into its immediate source.
But those who are exalted above the world
  are indissoluble, eternal.

Gospel of Philip 53; cf. GS p.330, NHS20 pp.146–47

Similarly, in the early Christian *Clementine Homilies,* Peter makes the same observation:

> Hence, therefore, God – teaching men with respect to the truth of existing things, being Himself one – has distinguished all principles into pairs and opposites, Himself being the one and sole God from the beginning, having made heaven and earth, day and night, light and fire, sun and moon, life and death....
>
> Since, as we have said, we see all things in pairs and contraries, and as the night is first, and then the day; and first ignorance, then knowledge; first disease, then healing; so the things of Error come first into our life, then Truth supervenes, as the physician upon the disease.

Clementine Homilies II:15, II:33, CH pp.38, 48

See also: **aḍdād**, **du'ī**, **dvaita**, **dvandva**, **yīn yáng**.

du'ī (P), **duī** (Pu/H), **dūjā**, **dūjī** (Pu) *Lit.* duality; mystically, the duality of this world. Rūmī says that the divine "Unity" is beyond the duality inherent in language:

> The (divine) Unity is beyond description and condition:
> nothing enters the arena of speech except duality *(du'ī).*
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:2034, MJR6 p.371*

The soul, says Guru Nānak, is made "blind and deaf" by absorption in duality:

> Through duality *(dūjī)* and mal-intellect,
> the bride is gone blind and deaf:
> She wears the perishable jacket of lust and wrath.
> The Lord, her spouse, is within her home,
> but the ignorant bride knows Him not:
> Without her Husband, she can obtain no sleep.
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1022, MMS*

The escape, says Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, lies in concentration at the eye centre:

> Concentrate your attention behind the eyes.
> Here, duality *(duī)* will vanish.
> Keep your attention fixed on the light *(jyoti).*
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 19:18.11–12, SBP p.152*

See also: **aḍdād, duality, dvaita, dvandva, yīn yáng**.

dvait(a) (S/H), **dubidhā** (Pu) *Lit.* duality, dualism, otherness; contrary to oneness with God; as in *Dvaita Vedānta.* The essential point upon which Vedantic schools are divided is the nature of the relationship between the self *(ātman)* and God *(Brahman).* The school which holds that the self and God are distinct is called *Dvaitavādā* (the theory of dualism). The school which maintains that in reality the two are one, the separation being only apparent or an illusion, is called *Advaita Vedānta* (Non-dualism):

> For when there is duality *(dvaita),* as it were,
> then one smells another, one sees another,
> one hears another, one speaks to another,
> one thinks of another, one knows another.
> But when everything has become the Self,
> then what should one smell, and through what?
> What should one see, and through what?
> What should one hear, and through what?
> What should one speak, and through what?

> What should one think, and through what?
> What should one know, and through what?
> Through what should one know That owing to which all this is known –
> Through what, my dear, should one know the Knower?
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 2:4.14, U3 p.183*

Later Indian mystics have also regarded duality as an illusion and creation of the mind. Thus, Guru Nānak writes:

> The mad duality *(dubidhā)* has maddened man's mind:
> in false avarice, he has wasted his life.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1342, MMS*

And Guru Amardās says:

> He alone is the silent sage who stills his mind's duality *(dubidhā):*
> silencing his duality *(dubidhā),* he reflects on the Lord.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1128, MMS*

See also: **aḍdād**, **duality**, **du'ī**, **dvandva**, **yīn yáng**.

dvandva (S/H) *Lit.* a pair; thus, a pair of opposites; hence, the pairs of opposites, such as up and down, past and future, hot and cold, light and darkness, positive and negative, joy and sorrow, love and hatred, pleasant and unpleasant, fame and ignominy, praise and criticism, friendship and enmity, birth and death, becoming and passing away, movement and stillness, and so on.

The fabric of the world is built out of this play of opposites. Their origin is in the realm of the universal mind, where the first division of mind and soul takes place. Because the duality arises out of oneness, everything is balanced in nature, making one complete whole; but, in the physical world, it is experienced as the continual interplay of duality.

This is the play of *māyā* or illusion, which keeps man and all other creatures continually active, chasing elusive phantoms which ever escape their grasp. The illusion of this duality arises when the mind, through the senses, comes into contact with the objects of the senses. The different perceptions lead the human mind and body to opposing feelings and reactions. These are experienced as pleasant or unpleasant, likes and dislikes, and so on. When a person identifies himself with his body, he experiences this interplay as pleasure and pain. He thus automatically burdens himself with pain, even when he seems to be enjoying pleasures, since everything has its inevitable opposing reaction.

Only when the soul has freed itself from mind and *māyā* is it realized that the pairs of opposites were only an illusion. Then, even if the individual is still living in the body, they can no longer disturb his inner equipoise, for he has risen above them.

Of all the Hindu texts, it is probably the *Bhagavad Gītā* which dwells at greatest length on the effect of the pairs of opposites. All creatures, says Kṛishṇa, are bewildered and deluded by their constant interplay:

> O descendant of Bhārata! O slayer of enemies!
> Right from their birth,
>   all creatures exist in a state of delusion *(moha),*
>   arising from their instinctive likes and dislikes
>   for the pairs of opposites *(dvandva).*
>
> But good men, in whom there is no sin *(pāpa),*
>   freed from the delusion *(moha)*
>   of the pairs of opposites *(dvandva),*
>   worship me with firm resolve.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 7:27–28*

Kṛishṇa also counsels Arjuna to rise above their effect:

> O Arjuna, the *Vedas* deal with the three *gunas.*
> But you be free from the influence of the three *gunas,*
>   free from the pairs of opposites *(dvandva),*
>   ever constant in purity,
>   unmindful of acquiring and possessing,
>   firmly established in the Self.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 2:45; cf. BGT*

And:

> O mighty-armed one,
>   he who hates nothing and is attracted to nothing,
>   is known as one who is established in renunciation.
> Free from the pairs of opposites *(dvandva),*
>   he is easily liberated from bondage.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 5:3; cf. BGT*

See also: **aḍḍād, duality, du'ī, dvaita, guṇa, yīn yáng**.

dvāparayuga (S), **dvāpar yug(a)** (H/Pu), **duāpar jug** (Pu) *Lit.* resting on *(para)* two *(dvā)* age *(yuga);* the third of the four *yugas* or cycles into which time is divided in traditional Hindu cosmology. *Dvāpara* is also the name of that side of a dice with two spots. It is the third *yuga* because a throw of two is the third best throw of traditional Indian dice, which are oblong and numbered only on the four long sides.

See also: **yuga**.

fayḍ (A), **fayż** (P) *Lit.* pouring out, flow, overflow (of water, a river); thus, emanation, effusion; hence also, munificence, abundance, grace; mystically, emanation or effusion as the process by which God creates the creation. That is, God emanates Himself into the creation; He effuses forth from the unmanifested Essence of Himself.

In the first stirrings of the creative process within the Godhead, the First Entification or First Cause is also called the Most Holy Emanation *(al-Fayḍ al-Aqdas),* while the Second Entification or First Caused is called the Holy Emanation *(al-Fayḍ al-Muqaddas).*

Fayḍ also means the flow of grace and blessings.

See also: **emanations** (4.1), **fayḍ** (▸2), **al-Fayḍ al-Aqdas** (2.1), **ta'ayyun** (4.1).

ghor kaliyug(a) (H/Pu) *Lit.* worst *(ghor)* of *kaliyuga; kaliyuga* at its worst or most intense; the lowest ebb in the cycle of the four ages *(yugas),* as experienced here in the physical creation, *kaliyuga* being the darkest, spiritually speaking, of the four ages, and the one through which the world is currently passing.

Kaliyuga is said to span a period of 432,000 years, but how far advanced it is, is a matter of speculation. Some commentators say that it is only a few thousand years old, others that it is nearing completion.

See also: **kaliyuga**, **yuga**.

guṇa (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* attribute, quality; form or characteristic of matter, mind and energy; one or other of the three forces prevalent throughout all regions of the mind, governing the interplay of diversity in these realms of creation, and known to Vedantic and Hindu philosophy as *sattva, rajas* and *tamas (satoguṇ, rajoguṇ* and *tamoguṇ);* personified as the Hindu deities, *Brahmā* (*rajas,* the creator), *Vishṇu* (*sattva,* the preserver) and *Shiva* (*tamas,* the destroyer).

The *guṇas* are the three forces of the mind by which differentiation and division in space and time come about, this differentiation being characteristic of the mind worlds. The *guṇas* are also the means by which all things are to be found in dual form – they are thus the architect of polarity or duality.

Differentiation of the divine Unity into multiplicity also produces the illusion of cause and effect. Consequently, the *guṇas* are also the origin of what is called causality.

As observed in the physical world, the three *guṇas* are *rajas, tamas* and *sattva. Rajas* is the outgoing impulse of manifestation and coming into being. It is the creative urge, the positive pole, the motor power, the future. It is hot as opposed to cold, male as opposed to female, the creative growth, vitality and vibrancy of spring rather than the indrawing of energies in winter.

Tamas is the attribute of inertia, decay, dissolution and darkness. It is receptivity and quiescence; the withdrawing of energy into potential, as plants withdraw into their seeds or roots during winter. It is the negative pole, centripetal rather than centrifugal, the past not the future, catabolism rather than anabolism, night not day, death rather than birth, destruction as opposed to creation.

Sattva is the point of balance between *rajas* and *tamas,* but it is more than just that. It is also the point out of which *rajas* and *tamas* actually come into being. In a pendulum, the expression of potential energy in the downswing is *rājasik* in nature and the storage of that energy as potential, on the upswing, is *tāmasik.* Here, the *sattva guṇa* is represented by the fulcrum – the point of suspension or origin, out of which *rajas* and *tamas* come into being.

Time, which also arises in the region of the universal mind, is similarly experienced in these three modes: moving into the future *(rajas),* lying in the past *(tamas)* and the actual point of experience, the 'now' which gives rise to both the past and the future – the present moment *(sattva).* Similarly, the energy of space is the *sattva* 'zero point' or 'point' of origin from which arises the physical universe and its duality.

All of life, at all levels, manifests the play of these three *guṇas.* In emotional and mental life, they are evident as depression and excitability, sadness and happiness, fear and bravado, and so on, with the balancing and peaceful effect of the *sattva guṇa.* These attributes are also to be found in material forms. Generally, they are present in complex and convoluted mixtures, but they are a part of everything, an integral aspect of the tapestry of creation in the mind worlds. They are the warp and weft of the fabric of existence in the physical, astral and causal realms. They are the means by which the multiplicity of creation is made manifest. They are also the cause of the ceaseless activity or *chitta vṛittis* of the mind – at one moment active *(rājasik),* at another dull *(tāmasik),* and only very rarely in a state of equipoise *(sāttvik).*

The *guṇas* represent the primary forces of the mind with which the soul has to contend on its upward journey, weaving the great diversity of *māyā* (illusion). In the realms of the mind, the influence of the *guṇas* is all-pervading. Only when a soul gains the strength to transcend the universal mind, with the help of a mystic who has himself done so, can it claim to have risen above their effects. The state of balance represented by the *sattva guṇa* is a desirable and laudable goal in human life; liberation of the soul, however, entails rising above the realm of the three *guṇas*.

The word *guṇa* not only means 'quality', but also 'rope' or 'strand'. The *guṇas* are not an abstract quality alone, but are the essential constituents of *māyā* (illusion) or *prakṛiti* (the subtle blueprint of nature). They are the three strands out of which the rope of *māyā* is twisted together. Taking the metaphor further, salvation or liberation means that the soul must become free from the binding influence of *māyā* and her three constituent ropes or strands:

> The *guṇas* are so called because they bind the spirit.
>
> *Sānkhyapravachana Bhāshya 1:61*

Swāmī Nikhilānanda summarizes the traditional Vedantic point of view on the *guṇas:*

> *Māyā,* or *prakṛiti,* is said to consist of the three *guṇas,* known as *sattva, rajas* and *tamas.* The word *guṇa* is usually translated into English as 'quality', which does not give the precise meaning of the original. *Sattva, rajas* and *tamas* are not qualities of *māyā* in the same sense as hardness is a quality of iron, or softness of butter, or heat of fire. The three *guṇas* are the ingredients of *māyā;* they may be compared to three strands which constitute the rope of *māyā;* the rope by which *māyā* binds man to the illusory world. *Māyā* has no existence independent of the *guṇas.* The three *guṇas* are present, in varying degrees, in all objects, gross or subtle, including the mind, the *buddhi* (intellect) and the ego. The food which nourishes our body, the thought which is the function of the mind, the duty that elevates man from the animal level, charity, worship, sacrifice – in short, everything belonging to the universe of *māyā* – contains these three *guṇas.*
>
> At the end of a world cycle, when names and forms go back to the state of non-manifestation or involution, the *guṇas* remain in a state of non-differentiation or equilibrium. This is called the seed state of the universe; it is described as the sleep of the cosmic Soul. *Māyā* at that time exists as the Cause alone, without any of its manifestations. Suddenly, this equilibrium is disturbed by the will of the Lord, and the *guṇas* begin to assert their individual characteristics. Different objects, subtle and gross, come into existence. The tangible universe manifests itself step by step.
>
> *Rajas* and *tamas* have opposing characteristics, while *sattva* strikes the balance between the two. The principal trait of *rajas* is energy, and from it has emanated the 'primal flow of activity'. Through its power, the phenomenal universe alternates between evolution and involution – manifestations of names and forms and their recession

into the seed state. The visible effects of *rajas,* in a human being, for instance, are a ceaseless activity through which expression is given to ambition, lust, anger, avarice, arrogance, egotism, envy, pride, jealousy and so forth. Under its influence a man becomes violently attached to the world. *Rajas* is the source of suffering.

Tamas is the veiling power that hides the true nature of a thing and makes it appear as other than what it really is. The influence of *tamas* is seen, in man, in his ignorance, lassitude, dullness, inadvertence and stupidity. When *tamas* predominates over *sattva* and *rajas,* he goes to sleep or remains inactive. It deprives a man of right judgment or definite belief, and subjects him to doubt and uncertainty. After *tamas* has veiled the true nature of the Self, *rajas* exerts its projecting power, and creates the many fantasies that constitute an unenlightened man's practical life. And alas, even scholars well-versed in philosophy cannot escape its hypnotic spell. It is the mother of delusion.

Sattva is the giver of happiness, and is the real friend of man in his effort to realize Truth. It manifests itself in man as humility, guilelessness, self-control, unselfishness, purity, contentment, truthfulness, fearlessness, faith, devotion, yearning for liberation, and other similar spiritual attributes. When *sattva* predominates, a man feels detached with respect to the world, lessens his physical activities, intensifies his contemplation, and strives in various ways to attain peace and blessedness. Through the cultivation of *sattva,* both *rajas* and *tamas* are kept under control.

The three *guṇas* always exist together. There cannot be pure *sattva* without *rajas* and *tamas;* or pure *rajas,* without *sattva* and *tamas;* or pure *tamas,* without *sattva* and *rajas.* The difference between one being and another lies in the varying preponderances of the *guṇas.*

The three *guṇas,* it must not be forgotten, belong to *māyā, prakṛiti* or ignorance, which includes everything in nature – inorganic, organic or psychic. They are the characteristics of relativity. As long as a man is attached to any of them, he is a phenomenal being and not a free soul. Even the gods and angels are under the influence of the *guṇas.* The gods and superhuman beings show a preponderance of *sattva;* men, of *rajas;* and subhuman beings, of *tamas. Brahman,* alone untouched by *māyā,* is beyond the *guṇas. Sattva* binds a man with attachment to happiness, *rajas* with attachment to activity, and *tamas* with attachment to delusion.

The three *guṇas* may be compared to three robbers who waylay a man in the forest. *Tamas,* one of the robbers, wants to destroy him; but at the persuasion of *rajas,* the second robber, he is bound hand and foot to a tree and relieved of all his treasures. After some time *sattva,* the third robber, returns, frees the man from his bondage, takes

> him gently out of the forest, and sets him on the highway leading to his house. Then *sattva* takes leave of him, because he too, being a robber, does not dare accompany the man out of the forest for fear of the police. *Tamas* wants to destroy a man; *rajas* binds him to the world and robs him of his spiritual treasures; *sattva* sets him on the path to freedom. *Tamas* is to be overcome by *rajas*, and *rajas* by *sattva*. But finally *sattva*, too, is to be given up if the aspirant seeks total freedom. Truth lies beyond the three *guṇas*.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS pp.52–54*

Indian Saints have also said that a soul should endeavour to escape from the realm of the three *guṇas*, and this is amply illustrated in their writings:

> In the universe, the union of sensitiveness and stupefaction,
> wherever I see, I find God pervading there.
> The body is bound down by the three *guṇas:*
> whosoever comes in this world, he plays (their game).
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 21, MMS*

And:

> In the three *guṇas*, equipoise (*sahaj*, peace) is not obtained;
> The three *guṇas* lead astray the mortal in doubt....
> In the fourth state, there is spiritual bliss (*sahaj*, peace).
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 68, MMS*

ḥaluk (He) *Lit.* garment, covering; the garment or covering of light surrounding God's *kavod* (glory), as described by the Jewish *Merkavah* school of mysticism (200 BCE – 600 CE). The biblical reference from which the term was drawn is understood as a poetic description of the creation as a manifestation of God's light. In one of the biblical psalms, God is described as:

> (Thou) who coverest Thyself
> with light as with a garment *(ḥaluk):*
> Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.
>
> *Psalm 104:2, KJV*

The term is also used in the *Zohar* to describe the light revealed at the time of creation in the process of the emanation of the *sefirot* (the divine qualities). It is thus the visual aspect of the Word or Utterance of God. This divine light emanates from the primordial point of Light, which the *Zohar* elsewhere calls the *Ayn-Sof*, the transcendent Source of all creation:

> For I have said that all the lights draw their light from the supernal Light (of *Ayn-Sof*), the mystery of all mysteries.... They all constitute levels of illumination, and in the light of each level there is revealed what is revealed.... Each one shines and is held in the light that is within, and does not separate outward.... The light that is revealed is called 'the garment *(ḥaluk)* of the King'; the light that is within is hidden light, in which dwells One that is not separated, and is not revealed.
>
> *Zohar 3:291b, WZ1 p.246*

Some Kabbalists also understood the garment of light to be like an astral or etheric body. This they equated with the *ẓelem* (image) of God, in which, according to *Genesis*, God created man.

See also: **kavod** (2.1), **ẓelem** (5.1).

ḥaqā'iq (A/P) (sg. A. *ḥaqīqah*, P. *ḥaqīqat*) *Lit.* realities, essences, true natures; a plural form, denoting the hidden realities, the unseen essences, patterns or archetypes that underlie the many individual parts and aspects of creation.

The term appears in a number of Sufi expressions. The *ḥaqā'iq al-Asmā'* (realities of the Names), for instance, refer to the individual essences or realities from which each particular Name is projected. The *ḥaqā'iq al-ashyā'* refer to the hidden essences of things rather than living beings.

The *ḥaqā'iq al-ilāhīyah* (the divine realities) are comprised of a certain number of divine Names, from which are projected the same number of essences called *al-ḥaqā'iq al-kiyānīyah* (the existential realities). The *ḥaqā'iq al-ilāhīyah* span all the three worlds: the *'ālam al-arwāḥ* (the realm of spirits), the *'ālam al-mithāl* (the realm of patterns) and the *'ālam al-ajsām* (the realm of bodies). The number of such divine Names and essences varies from list to list, a commonly quoted number being twenty-eight.

The *ḥaqā'iq al-kiyānīyah* are dynamic emanations and forces at work in the three worlds comprising creation. They include fundamental creative emanations such as *al-'Aql al-Kullī*, the Universal Intelligence or creative Power, and *al-nafs al-kullī* (the universal mind), as well as aspects of Islamic cosmological doctrine (the firmaments of the various planets), and the stages of matter and creatures in the material world such as *martabat al-jamād* (inorganic stage), *martabat al-ḥayawānīyah* (animal stage) and *martabat al-insānīyah* (human stage).

Ḥaqā'iq is also a technical term used by the gnostic *Ismā'īlīyah* and related groups. It is believed that during what they call the prophetic era, the *ḥaqā'iq* (realities) remain hidden behind the exterior form of religious law and scriptures. These *ḥaqā'iq* are eternal, remaining constant when the exterior forms of religion change. This truth is in the keeping of the divinely guided *Imām* and his appointed hierarchy of teachers, and is revealed to an individual at initiation. Like many Sufi groups, the *Ismā'īlīyah* also describe the creation as consisting of three main realms, the *ḥaqā'iq* spanning all.

See also: **al-Ḥaqīqah** (2.2).

hsìng (xìng) (C) *Lit.* nature; intrinsic personality, inherent nature; individual characteristics. The *hsìng* of anything – animate or inanimate – arises from *té,* the dynamic aspect of *Tào* expressed in the physical universe. If any object or being does not follow its inherent nature, it will be out of harmony with itself, and consequently be ill at ease. Ultimately, it will languish and die, or be dispersed. Chuāng Tzu, a prominent voice in early Taoism, takes the example of the "swamp pheasant". Though the boundaries of its life are constrained by its nature, it must still be able to express that natural instinct if it is to remain "content":

> The swamp pheasant has to walk ten paces for one peck (of food) and a hundred paces for one drink, but (nevertheless) doesn't want to be kept in a cage. Though you treat it like a king (in captivity), its spirit won't be content.
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 3, CTW p.52*

Another early Taoist, Lièh Tzu, emphasizes that everything has its own purpose and nature:

> It is the office of Heaven to beget and to shelter,
> the office of Earth to shape and to support,
> the office of the sage to teach and reform,
> the office of each thing to perform its function.
>
> *Lièh Tzu 1, BLT p.19*

There is a close relationship between *ch'ì* and *hsìng. Ch'ì* activates one's nature, and too much *ch'ì* indicates a boisterous nature, often prone to anger. On the other hand, too little *ch'ì* results in weakness and depression. *Hsìng* is therefore a distinctive pattern of *ch'ì* in each person which reveals one's nature or personality.

Taoist spiritual practice encourages a person to let go of his negative human tendencies, which are part of his nature or *hsìng*. The intention is to eliminate the ego or self-centredness, something considered necessary in order to become absorbed in *Tào*.

ì (yì) (C) *Lit.* change, transformation; pronounced 'ee'; fundamental to the cosmic order brought about by the interaction of the primary forces of duality, *yīn* and *yáng*, as well as their further manifestations through the five agents or elements *(wǔ hsíng)*. All phenomena depend on the tension that occurs between activity and receptivity (or response) through the *yīn yáng* process of creation and transformation. Another term, *huà wù* (*lit.* to transform things) is also used to describe the principle of change and transformation in creation.

The *Ì Chīng (Classic of Change)*, an early Taoist text from around the sixth century BCE, addresses the nature of change in the universe as both a phenomenon of nature and a philosophy for students of Taoism. The *Ì Chīng* emphasizes both the necessity for change and the cause of change:

> The Creative and the Receptive are the real secret of the Changes. Inasmuch as the Creative and Receptive present themselves as complete, the changes between them are also posited. If the Creative and Receptive were destroyed, there would be nothing by which the changes would be perceived. If there were no more changes to be seen, the effects of the Creative and the Receptive would also gradually cease.
>
> *Ì Chīng, ICW pp.322–23*

Here, the "Creative" is essentially the cause of action, while the "Receptive" is the response to action. Hence, change *(ì)* is caused by the interplay between action and reaction. In the course of action and reaction, things are transformed – change occurs – which manifests further actions and reactions.

See also: **wǔ hsíng, yīn yáng.**

jamād (A/P) (pl. *jamādāt*) *Lit.* inanimate matter, minerals. Sufis have described inanimate things as continuously engaged in fulfilling the divine decree, without any will of their own. In the *Qur'ān,* God says:

> When He decrees a matter,
>   He says to it "Be *(Kun)!*" –
> And it is.
>
> *Qur'ān 2:117; cf. AYA*

Ibn 'Arabī explains this passage to mean that even inanimate things *(jamādāt)* hear and respond to His command. Man, however, because of his intellect, does not hear the divine command, and follows his own will:

Nothing in creation is higher than minerals *(jamād);*
Then come plants *(nabāt)*
according to the natural measure and balance,
and after plants, the sentient creatures.
Everything knows its Creator
by mystic revelation and inner vision;
But he who is named Adam is fettered
by intellect and thinking,
or else he is under the yoke of traditional faith.

Ibn 'Arabī, Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam 82; cf. in MJR8 p.43

He is saying that although man ("he who is named Adam") has the highest potential of all, actually inert minerals express the divine will more responsively since they have no sense of self to generate speculative thought and dogmatic beliefs, which come between them and God. On this reasoning, plants are the next closest to God, followed by animals, and lastly man. Ibn 'Arabī is making his point by inverting the mystical reality as it is normally understood.

Rūmī puts things more simply when he says that everything, even inanimate things, glorifies God by expressing some of His attributes in its own special way, known to Him alone. Man alone has lost his sense of worship, and is "insolvent":

Since You are demanding gold from an insolvent,
give him gold in secret, O rich King! …
For You have made everything a glorifier (of Yourself) –
the undiscerning entity and the discerning (alike).
Each glorifies (You) in a different fashion,
such that one is unaware of the state of the other.
Man disbelieves in the glorification
uttered by inanimate things *(jamādāt),*
but those inanimate things are masters of worship.

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:1492, 1495–97; cf. MJR4 p.84

"Inanimate things are masters of worship" because they have no will of their own and are entirely submissive to the divine Will. In essence, both Rūmī and Ibn 'Arabī are saying that God is within everything, playing a hidden game of worship with Himself.

jam' al-aḍdād (A), **jam'-i aẓdād** (P) *Lit.* union of opposites.

See also: **aḍdād**, **al-ma'ná**.

jawhar (A/P) *Lit.* substance, substantial nature; contrasted with *'araḍ* (Arabic) or *'araż* (Persian), implying an action or attribute. The distinction between substance and accident has its roots in Greek philosophy. An *'araż* (accident) has no existence apart from the *jawhar* (substance) to which it belongs. Examples of an *'araż* would be colour, quality, motion, rest and so on. These only exist when they are associated with a substance *(jawhar);* they cannot exist by themselves. Although a *jawhar* is also impermanent – only God being permanent – yet it constitutes the substantial nature of a thing. The *jawhar* of a thing constitutes also the perfection of its nature.

Making use of this distinction familiar to Muslim philosophers, Rūmī says that acts of religious devotion are "accidents"; what a devotee must take to God is not the *'araż* (pl. *'araż'hā, a'rāż*), but the *jawhar,* that is, his essential substance. The only value in acts of devotion is if they change one's *jawhar* from impure to pure, from bestial to human:

> You have a substance *(jawhar),*
>   human or asinine; (bring that to God);
> How can you bring these accidents *('araż'hā)*
>   (of word and deed) which have passed away?
> As regards these accidents *('araż'hā)* of prayer and fasting –
>   since that which does not endure
>   for two moments becomes naught –
>   it is impossible to carry over the accidents *(a'rāż);*
> But they (may) take away defects from the substance *(jawhar);*
> So that the substance *(jawhar)*
>   becomes changed by means of this accident *('araż),*
>   as when disease is removed by abstinence.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:945–48, MJR2 pp.270*

Rūmī then provides further examples of the process by which the "accident" produces a "substance" of value:

> The planting of the garden is the accident *('araż),*
>   the produce of the garden became the substance *(jawhar)* –
> Behold the object!
> Regard, also, the practice of alchemy as the accident *('araż);*
> If a substance *(jawhar)* is produced by that alchemy,
>   bring it into view.
> Burnishing is the accident *('araż),* O prince;
> From this accident *('araż)* is born the substance *(jawhar),* purity.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:953–55, MJR2 p.271*

Therefore, he concludes, "deeds" are an "accident". What is needed is the "fruit" of those "deeds". Otherwise, he says, it is like sacrificing the "goat's shadow" instead of the goat:

> Do not say, then, "I have done deeds."
> Show the fruit of those accidents *(a'rāż),*
> do not evade my request.
> This attribution of qualities is an accident *('arāż).*
> Be silent: do not kill the goat's shadow as a sacrifice!
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:956–57; cf. MJR2 pp.271*

jihah (A), **jihat** (P) (pl. *jihāt*) *Lit.* direction, region, space; often as the six directions (A. *sitt jihah,* P. *shash jihat*), *viz.* left, right, front, rear, above and below (or within and without). Like many other mystics, Sufis have pointed out that direction and space pertain to the physical creation, but in the realms traversed on the mystic path, these do not exist:

> The world of creation *('ālam-i khalq)*
> is furnished with quarters and directions *(jihāt).*
> Know that the world of the divine Command *('ālam-i Amr)*
> and Attributes *(Ṣifāt)* is beyond direction *(bī-jihat).*
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:3692; cf. MJR4 p.475*

Sufis also say that human beings are trapped or enclosed in *jihāt* (*i.e.* space), and since it is very difficult to imagine a realm beyond *jihāt,* they search for God outside themselves, looking in the six directions – a futile effort, since He is within, in a dimension beyond *jihāt.* Maghribī writes:

> Since you are enclosed within the six directions *(shash jihat),*
> you seek Him there.
> But if your own directions *(jihat)* become obliterated,
> you will see Him outside dimensions.
>
> *Maghribī, in ASN p.6*

The six directions are portrayed in Sufi literature as the limits of human knowledge, limiting the ability to perceive what lies beyond them. Rūmī says that there is a mystic 'direction', that of divine "love", which leads beyond the "limits" of the "six":

> The intellect says,
> "The six directions *(shash jihat)* are limits,
> and there is no way out."

Love says, "There is a way,
  and I have travelled it many times."

Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 132:1522, KSD1 p.86, KDS1 p.99, in SPL p.226

Rūmī also talks of the inexplicable "Call" of God which comes from this inner 'direction':

A wondrous Call *(Nidā')* is coming:
It is not from inside, nor from outside,
  neither from the right, nor from the left,
  neither from the rear, nor from the front.

Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 841:8806, KSD2 p.170, KDS1 p.342, DSTR p.136

jubilee From the Hebrew *yovel* (the sabbatical period). According to the Bible, a jubilee year occurs every fifty years, following seven *shemittot* (sabbatical cycles of seven years each) in the agricultural cycle. Seven seven-year periods makes forty-nine years – the fiftieth year making the jubilee year. During a jubilee year, slaves were to be set free, property restored to its owners and so on.

According to Kabbalah scholar, Gershom Scholem, a mystical interpretation of the jubilee year and the *shemittot* was prevalent among the thirteenth-century Spanish Kabbalists, following publication of the anonymous *Sefer Temunah (Book of the Vision)* in Catalonia. This book is primarily a mystical interpretation of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

According to the *Sefer Temunah,* there is a mystical doctrine of seven cosmic cycles or *shemittot* each of which lasts 7000 years and which reflect different qualities of God – symbolized by the different *sefirot* – followed, in the 50,000th year by a 'jubilee' in which everything returns to its source in the third *sefirah* of *Binah* (from where the creation had initially emanated).

The medieval Jewish mystics often used these terms as symbols of mystic principles. The thirteenth-century 'Ezra of Gerona was one of the earliest to give a mystic importance to the concept of the jubilee and *shemittot,* but it is unclear whether the basic concepts were borrowed as a result of contact with Arabic, Greek or Indian philosophy.

See also: **shemittot**.

kalā (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* art, skill, craft, trick; thus, a contrivance, a machine, a power; mystically, the art or craft of God or a Master, or a power which emanates from a deity, as opposed to that deity himself. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, describing the first manifestation of creation, writes:

> When His will surged, *Shabd* (the Word) became manifest and brought into being the whole of creation; first *sat lok* (true region) and then, by the *kalā* (skill, power) of *Sat Purush* (true Lord), the three worlds and all the rest of creation were brought into being.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 2:30; cf. SB p.59*

The term has also been used in the *Ādi Granth* for the play of God in creation:

He who realizes the secret of this contrivance *(kalā),*
he meets the supreme *Guru*-God *(Gurdeo,* divine *Guru).*
Beṇī Jī, Ādi Granth 974, MMS

God works this play with great skill:

With all the skill *(kalā),* He plays His plays.
Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 294, MMS

kaliyug(a) (S/H/Pu), **kalijug** (Pu) *Lit.* age *(yuga)* of strife or discord *(kali);* the fourth age in the cycle of time through which the physical universe passes, according to Hindu cosmology; the present age. The designation comes from *kali* as the name of the worst or losing throw of an Indian dice, the face with one spot. In fact, the meaning of strife or discord may be derived from *kali* as the losing throw, rather than *vice versa.* Traditional Indian dice are rectangular, the four scoring faces being the long oblong sides.

The term *kali* should not be confused with *Kālī* (the goddess of destruction) or *Kāl* (the god of death). The association between *kali* and *Kālī* or *Kāl* is only phonetic, although this was probably in the minds of writers when speaking of *kaliyuga.*

See also: **yuga**.

kalp(a) (S/H) *Lit.* an age, an aeon; a cosmic unit of time in Hindu mythology. According to the *Vishṇu Purāṇa,* a *kalpa* spans 4.32 billion years, this being one thousand cycles of the four *yugas,* also called a day of *Brahmā,* at the end of which the creation projected out of *Brahman* undergoes dissolution *(pralaya).* An equivalent period of time then elapses (a night of *Brahmā*) before a new creation takes place. How exact these timings are is unknown and may only indicate a vast period of time. Some authorities include a night of *Brahmā* in one *kalpa,* making it 8.64 billion years. The dissolution *(pralaya)* at the end of a *kalpa* is also known as *kalpānta* (the end of a *kalpa*). Hence, *kalpa* itself has also come to mean dissolution.

See also: **pralaya**, **yuga**.

kav ha-midah (He) *Lit.* a line *(kav)* of measurement *(midah);* a standard, a limitation; used in the *Zohar* to describe the beginning of the process of emanation from within the *Ayn-Sof.* It defines the extent of sefirotic activity. It is the ray of light emanating from the *Ayn-Sof;* it is the first Word, the expression of the divine will, and serves as the permanent link between the *Ayn-Sof* and the *tehiru,* the vacuum created by the initial *ẓimẓum* or contraction of the *Ayn-Sof.*

See also: **boẓina di-kardinuta**, **tehiru**, **ẓimẓum**.

kawn wa-fasād (A), **kawn-u fasād** (P) *Lit.* generation *(kawn)* and *(wa, u)* decay *(fasād);* generation and corruption, creation and destruction; coming into being and its converse of death, decay and degeneration; the continual process of change and transmutation in the physical universe. Rūmī describes how alluring this world can seem in the phase of *kawn* (generation), yet warns of its faithlessness with the inevitable *fasād* (decay) which must necessarily follow:

> He (the Divine) said, "I defrauded you,
> but I did tell you the truth of the matter,
> by way of admonition."
> Likewise the world, though it blossomed delightfully,
> at the same time uttered a (warning) cry,
> and declared its faithlessness.
> In this realm of generation and decay *(kawn-u fasād),*
> O master, generation *(kawn)* is the fraud,
> and decay *(fasād),* the admonition.
> Generation *(kawn)* says, "Come, I am delectable,"
> and decay *(fasād)* says, "Go, I am nothing."
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1592–95; cf. MJR4 p.360*

Since the spirit does not belong to this world of *kawn* and *fasād,* Rūmī also says:

> Take heed, lift up your heads from the *lā* of negation,
> put forth your heads from this fancy and vain imagining.
> O you who all are rotten
> in (the world of) generation and decay *(kawn-u fasād),*
> your everlasting soul neither grew nor came to birth.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1926–27; cf. MJR2 p.105*

See also: **guṇa**.

kelipot (He) (sg. *kelipah*) *Lit.* shells, husks, shards; mystically, a term first used by Rabbi Isaac Luria and by other later Kabbalists to denote the coverings which obscure the divine light or spark of the soul. According to the Kabbalists, the purpose of life is to throw off the *kelipah* so that the soul might shine in its natural brilliance; so that the spark can return to the primal divine Light. This process of soul liberation or redemption was called *tikkun* (perfecting, repair, restoration, redemption).

Luria taught that at the time of creation, a great cosmic catastrophe took place, which he called *shevirat ha-kelim* (the breaking of the vessels) in which the vessels of light, which were to contain the primal divine Light of the creation, were shattered by the intensity of this uncontrolled Light as it streamed out from God. The shattered pieces of the vessels, he called *kelipot*.

The *kelipot* fell into the creation and adhered to the sparks of some of the divine light that fell with them. The *kelipot* represent the absence of the divine light and are also termed *sitra aḥra* (the other side), shadow or darkness. The term is generally used to connote evil. In Jewish folklore, *kelipah* was frequently used as a synonym for the devil or evil.

See also: **niẓoẓot, parẓufim, shevirat ha-kelim, tehiru, ẓimẓum**.

kṛitayuga (S) *Lit.* accomplished, done or good *(kṛita)* age *(yuga);* the first of the four *yugas,* according to traditional Hindu cosmology; the designation *kṛita* comes from the name of that side of an Indian dice with four spots, which is the best or winning throw, traditional Indian dice being rectangular, with the four scoring faces on the oblong sides; hence, the best *yuga.* The meaning of *kṛita* as accomplished or good may explain why an alternative Sanskrit name for this age is *satya* (true) *-yuga* (H. *satyuga*).

See also: **satyuga, yuga**.

linkage of everything (Native North American) The interconnection of all things through the pervasiveness of the divine Spirit; something perceived intuitively by many people, and expressed in a variety of ways. Thus, according to Lakota holy man Frank Fools Crow (1891–1989), everything in creation is interlinked and interwoven:

> Mind, body and spirit are linked together. You cannot consider one without the others. The higher powers, the medicine person, and the community are linked together. People, other creatures, and the rest

> of creation are linked together. Thinking in dimensions like these keeps us from being narrow and self-centred. Instead, it stretches and expands the mind.
>
> *Fools Crow, in FCWP p.62*

mahā pralaya (S/H) *Lit.* grand *(mahā)* dissolution *(pralaya);* dissolution of the creation up to, but not including the Unmanifest.

See **pralaya**.

mahat (S/H) *Lit.* the great *(mahā)* one *(-t);* the first emanation or outward development of *prakṛiti* (the primal, subtle blueprint of nature); the cosmic intelligence or mind; the first manifestation within the universal mind of the dynamically changing and interacting web of forms found in all the regions of the mind – causal, astral and physical.

According to the *Sānkhya* system, the first manifestation of *prakṛiti* under the influence of *purusha* (being) is called *mahat* (the great one), because in its cosmic aspect it is the great seed or germ of the vast cosmos below. Just as a tree or a plant is present in potential or blueprint form even in a tiny seed, so too is all lower creation present as a mental counterpart in potential, seed or blueprint form in the *mahat,* as indeed it is in an even more subtle form in *prakṛiti.* The *mahat* is the first beginnings of the manifestation or emanation of all that lies below. Since *mahat* is the manifestation of *prakṛiti,* which is nonintelligent in character, *mahat* is not intelligence in itself. It is the cosmic apparatus or means by which the intelligence of *purusha* is manifested.

Within individual human beings, the cosmic intelligence manifested in *mahat* is reflected as *buddhi* (intellect and discrimination). Just as all human action emanates from the discrimination and thinking of the human mind and intellect, so too does all lower creation emanate from the cosmic 'thinking centre' of *mahat.*

Since knowledge of all creation is stored in this *mahat* – past, present and future – the term is also used to mean sacred knowledge. This, too, is reflected in the mental organ of the human mind, the *antaḥkaraṇa,* of which the *buddhi* is one of the four faculties. All the events – physical or mental – which take place during the lifetime of an individual are etched or impressed into the mental energy of the *antaḥkaraṇa,* forming a record in seed form of the individual's entire life. So too are the events of all lower creation stored in the *mahat,* the cosmic mind.

In *Vedānta,* the *mahat* is sometimes called the universal mind, a term that also appears in the theosophy of Annie Besant (1847–1933).[1] In Hindu tradition, *mahat* is also used as a name for *Shiva.*

See also: **antaḥkaraṇa** (5.1), **buddhi** (5.1), **prakṛiti**, **universal mind** (6.1).

1. *e.g.* Annie Besant, *The Ancient Wisdom, AW* p.133.

mahāyug(a) (S/H) *Lit.* great *(mahā)* age *(yuga);* one complete cycle of the four *yugas,* spanning – according to the *Padma Purāṇa* – 4.32 million years.

See also: **pralaya**, **yuga**.

ma'ná, al- (A/P) (pl. *ma'nī*) *Lit.* the meaning; figuratively, in Sufi usage, the inner essence, the inner reality; frequently translated as 'spirit'; in poetry, *ṣūrat* refers to the form of the poem and *ma'ná* to its meaning; in Sufism, *ṣūrat* refers to the outer forms of things and *ma'ná* to their inner essence.

In the writings of Rūmī, the distinction between meaning *(ma'ná)* and form *(ṣūrat)* is of primary significance. The form of something is its outer appearance. Its meaning is its inner, hidden reality. Ultimately, the deepest reality or meaning, hidden within all things, is God who is beyond the many forms of creation. As Rūmī says, "Form is shadow, Reality – the sun."[1] He also says that form arises from the hidden, spiritual Meaning or "Reality":

> Know that form springs from Reality *(Ma'ná)*
> as a lion from the thicket,
> or as voice and speech from thought....
> Form came from Formlessness, and returned thither,
> for, "Verily, unto Him we are returning."[2]
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1136, 1141; cf. MJR2 pp.63–64, in SPL pp.49–50*

And again:

> Know that the outward form passes away,
> but the world of Reality *(Ma'ná)* remains forever.
> How long will you make love with the shape of the jug?
> Leave aside the jug's shape: Go, seek water!
> Having seen the form,
> you are unaware of the Reality *(Ma'ná).*
> If you are wise, pick out the pearl from the shell.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:1020–22; cf. MJR2 p.274, in SPL p.20*

Other Sufis have said the same. 'Irāqī writes:

> How can Reality *(Ma'ná)* be squeezed into the box of form?
> What business has the *Sulṭān* in this beggar's realm?

In the end, what can he know who worships form,
  heedless of Reality *(Maʿná)?*
Tell me: what business can he have
  with the beauty of a hidden Beloved?

ʿIrāqī, Divine Flashes 9; cf. DF pp.90–91

The basic distinction between *maʿná* and *ṣūrat* is lost in many translations of Persian mystics' writings, as translators attempt to find a word for *maʿná* which fits the context – or their understanding of the context. 'Spirit' is a frequently used term, implying that which is unseen but more real than the apparent 'form'. But 'spirit' is often used to translate several other Persian and Arabic terms, such as *jān, rūḥ, sirr* and *ravān,* and is itself a term whose meaning depends on the context. A modern translator of Rūmī, W.C. Chittick, has observed that two of the great pioneer translators, R.A. Nicholson and A.J. Arberry, have used over a dozen different English words and phrases to translate *maʿná.* Nicholson uses "meaning, reality, spiritual reality, essential reality, spirit, spiritual truth, spiritual principle, spiritual thing, essence, idea, ideal thing," while "Arberry adds at least four other renderings: truth, heavenly truth, abstraction, verity."[3]

See also: **ṣūrah**.

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* VI:4747, *MJR6* p.520.
2. *Qur'ān* 2:156.
3. W.C. Chittick, *Sufi Path of Love, SPL* p.352 (n.12).

nimitta (S/H) *Lit.* cause, aim, object, motive, ground, reason; the instrumental or the efficient cause; the loom, for example, is the instrumental cause of the cloth.

See also: **causation**.

niẓoẓot (He) *Lit.* sparks; mystically, souls. In the description of creation expounded by Rabbi Isaac Luria, the *niẓoẓot* are the divine sparks of spirituality which fell into the material world (the realm of the *kelipot,* the husks or shells of physical matter) at the time of Adam's primordial sin. This event is expressed as the catastrophe of *shevirat ha-kelim* (the breaking of the vessels), which caused a scattering of the divine Light into the creation. The *niẓoẓot* are the individual souls which have become separated and cut off from the primal divine Light, by becoming encased in the shards of matter. The objective of life, according to Luria, is to bring about *tikkun* – perfection or restoration – of the sparks with their Source.

See also: **kelipot, parẓufim, shevirat ha-kelim, tehiru, ẓimẓum.**

noumenon (pl. *noumena*) The thing being thought of; from the Greek *noein* (to think, to perceive); from the same root as *nous* (mind); reality as opposed to phenomena; that which is independent of perception; a concept similar to that of Plato who contrasted *noēton* (*lit.* the mental, the spiritual; the world of *nous,* the world of 'ideas' or mental archetypes, the spiritual world) with *horaton* (*lit.* the visible; the visible world, the perceptible world).[1]

The distinction between *noumena* (things as they are in themselves) and *phenomena* (things as they appear) was introduced into Western philosophy by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804 CE). Objects or *phenomena,* he argued, cannot be the real objects themselves since they are influenced or modified by the nature of the mind and senses of the observer. Therefore, he postulated the existence of *noumena* – things as they are in themselves before perception, observation and thought. By the very nature of things, *noumena* cannot be observed or experienced directly as they are, but only as *phenomena.*

Many mystics, on the other hand, have said that neither the mind, the self, nor the eternal world, as generally experienced, has any essential reality. Both are illusions cast over the face of a higher Reality. This Reality is one of consciousness or being, rather than lifeless energy or substance. Kant believed in a plurality of things as they are in themselves. Mystics speak of only one fundamental Reality.

See also: **Logos** (3.1), **al-ma'ná.**

1. *e.g.* Plato, *Republic* 7:509d, 533a, *passim.*

pālang (H) A unit of measure; an ancient Indian measurement of space, no longer current. Some mystics have described the immensity of the inner realms by describing them as so many *pālangs* in extent. Thus, the extent of *trilokī* (the three worlds) has been given as one *pālang,* while Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh has described *mahā sunn,* the great void lying on the lower border of *bhanwar guphā* (rotating cave), itself lying on the threshold of the eternal realm, as seventy *pālangs* in circumference:

> This great sphere alone is seventy *pālangs* in circumference,
> and, in this sphere, it is at first pitch-dark.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 26:3.7, SBP p.227*

Other realms have been similarly described, but the measurement is not intended literally. Measurable space is a characteristic of the physical world alone. The idea behind such descriptions is to convey the idea of a spiritual immensity beyond human comprehension.

parlay, **parlo** (Pu) See **pralaya**.

parẓufim (He) (sg. *parẓuf*) *Lit.* faces, forms; configurations; a term used by Rabbi Isaac Luria, an important Kabbalist of sixteenth-century Safed, to describe the way the primal divine Light is ordered and structured so that it can flow into the creation. He described the *parẓufim* as coherent configurations or groupings of the ten *sefirot,* which are the initial emanations of the divine qualities. According to Luria's teaching, the infinite, undifferentiated light of the Godhead *(Aur Ayn-Sof)* was too pure, powerful and intense to enter the lower realms of the creation. It first needed to be organized, its component aspects filtered and arranged into structure and form. These arrangements or configurations of the component aspects of the divine Light, he called the five *parẓufim.*

When pure white light is passed through a prism, it separates into its component colours. In the same way, only when the pure divine Light – the primal Unity – is separated into its various component parts or qualities can it enter the creation. The qualities are the ten *sefirot* – the emanations, the separate 'colours' or qualities of the divine Light.

Since they are all aspects of the same one Light, none of the *sefirot* can exist in isolation from the others. The *sefirot* are therefore arranged into particular structures or configurations, the *parẓufim.* According to Luria, all the *sefirot* are present in each of the *parẓufim,* but a different *sefirah* predominates in each. Each *parẓuf* thus has a different character, although it is made up of all the same divine aspects or qualities as the others.

Luria describes five major realms: *Ayn-Sof* (the Godhead), *aẓilut* (emanation, the spiritual realm), *briah* (creation), *yeẓirah* (formation), and *'assiah* (making, the physical finite world). Each realm is reflected in the one below, and there is thus a continuous and constant relationship between the spiritual, mental and material worlds. Luria teaches that there are five *parẓufim* that activate these realms, although one *parẓuf* predominates in each realm. Similarly, each *parẓuf* contains all ten *sefirot,* although one *sefirah* predominates in each *parẓuf.* All the *sefirot* are thus considered active in each of the *parẓufim,* but in differing relationships.

Each *parẓuf* represents the organization of divine energies into a distinct configuration. When the *parẓufim* are in balance, they interrelate and energize each other so that the divine forces flow between them harmoniously. According to Luria, at the time the primal divine Light became dispersed into the creation, the harmonious flow of energy among the *parẓufim* was interrupted, and thus the divine realms went into a state of imbalance and disharmony. Luria called this dispersion of the primal Light the cosmic catastrophe of the *shevirat ha-kelim* (breaking of the vessels).

The five *parzufim* are: *Arikh Anpin* (the Long-faced One, the Long-suffering One, the Patient One), *Abba* (Father), *Imma* (Mother), *Ẓe'ir Anpin* (the Short-faced One, the Impatient One, the Male), and *Nukva* (the Female).

Arikh Anpin (the Patient One) represents the configuration of divine energy at the spiritual level of emanation, above the level of creation. He is patient and 'long-suffering' because He is beyond phenomena, beyond change. He is contrasted with the Impatient One, who represents the level of creation that is impermanent and constantly changing. He represents the level of *Keter* (Crown), or even the *Ayn-Sof* (infinite Godhead) in the sefirotic system.

Abba (the Father) and *Imma* (the Mother) represent the first separation of positive and negative energies as the creation comes into being, the duality that characterizes all creation. Originally, they were in constant union, with the divine energies flowing without interruption between them. Among the *sefirot,* they are represented mostly by *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom) and *Binah* (Understanding).

Below them, *Ẓe'ir Anpin* (the Impatient One, the Male) and *Nukva* (the Female) represent the same duality as the Father and the Mother, but vibrating at a lower intensity. The *sefirot* of *Ḥesed* (Grace) and *Din* (Judgment) are most closely represented in them. According to Luria, the Impatient One and the Female, when in harmonious union before the 'breaking of the vessels', had faced each other in eternal union, but now their backs are to each other. The flow of the creative energy that had formerly circulated between them continuously has stopped.

Jewish mystics have also described this rupture of the divine harmony among the *parzufim* in terms of the sin of Adam in the garden of Eden and his subsequent fall. Using the parallel metaphor of *Adam Kadmon* (the Primal Adam, the macrocosm), Luria says that at the time of the breaking of the vessels *(shevirat ha-kelim),* the pure white light which was being projected through the eyes of the *Adam Kadmon* could not be contained in the vessels of coarser light that had been previously emanated, and the vessels broke. Most of the divine light returned to the *Ayn-Sof,* but some sparks of the light dispersed into the creation. The dispersed light represents the sparks or souls imprisoned or exiled in the creation. The breaking of the vessels represents the rupture in the harmonious flowing of divine energies on many levels, during the process of creation, and symbolizes the cacophony and discord of earthly existence.

Luria explains that Adam of the garden of Eden, through his meditation, was intended to bring about the *tikkun* (return) of the sparks (imprisoned souls). Since he was a microcosm of the *Adam Kadmon,* he could have done so. However, Adam sinned. Instead of keeping his attention focused on God, he ate of the Tree of Knowledge and entered the realm of duality. He separated himself from God and brought his attention downward. He was thus 'thrown out' of the garden of Eden. In Luria's terms, the sparks were thrown into the vacuum, adhering to shards of matter, which he called the *kelipot.*

This action of Adam threw the relationships between all the divine powers into disharmony: the *parẓufim* of the Impatient One and the Female were turned 'back to back' and their energy flow was disrupted and polarized as a result. All cosmic relationships that were dependent on the continuous energy flow between these two *parẓufim* were thrown into chaos. Good and evil were materialized.

On a mystical level, the fall and banishment of Adam from the garden of Eden, according to Luria, also precipitated the fall of the realm of *'assiah* into the material realm, the realm of the *kelipot,* from its original place in the astral world. As a consequence, the realms above *'assiah,* each a reflection of the one above, also fall by one level each.

Before Adam sinned, the creation existed at a more spiritual level. The attention of all the creation and the divine forces were still upwardly directed and flowing in harmony. With Adam's sin, the attention started to flow away from the upper realms; everything dropped. The biblical Adam is the symbol for this fall of the attention to the material realms.

Luria's purpose was to teach humanity how to restore the sparks which are imprisoned in the creation, how to get the *parẓufim* back into harmony with each other – in other words, how to restore balance to the creation. Luria taught a process called *tikkun* (restoration or repair) that could restore the original balance and harmony in the creation and the individual. He taught that the *tikkun* lies in the hands of humanity, and that it is the particular responsibility of the Jews to perform specific spiritual practices *(yiḥudim, kavvanot* and *tikkunim)* to bring this about, thus restoring the original relationship of the *parẓufim* and liberating the imprisoned sparks.

See also: **Adam Kadmon, kelipot, niẓoẓot, shevirat ha-kelim, tehiru, ẓimẓum.**

prakṛiti (S/H), **prakriti** (Pu) *Lit.* at first *(pra)* + making *(kṛiti);* made first; matter or substance as opposed to spirit or being *(purusha);* primordial matter, primal nature; often translated as Nature; the source, essence, pattern or blueprint of the material world, originating in its most subtle form in the region of the universal mind; also, *māyā* (illusion).

Pra (first) *kṛita* (made) can also have the connotation of rough and ready, which is the sense in which the term 'Prakrit' is used for Indian vernacular languages. In this context, Prakrit is contrasted with Sanskrit *(saṇkṛita),* that which is 'well *(sam)* made *(kṛita)*' or polished.

Prakṛiti is described extensively, though simply, in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. The three essential forces which weave the tapestry of forms are the three *guṇas* (attributes). They are formed out of *prakṛiti*, and all souls are bound to the products of *prakṛiti:*

> The three *guṇas* of *sattva, rajas* and *tamas,*
> born of *prakṛiti,*
> bind the immortal soul to the body in its embodied state.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 14:5; cf. BGT*

The divine soul thus becomes imprisoned in bodies, and remains unliberated:

> A fragment *(aṃsha)* of my immortal Being,
> having become an embodied soul *(jīva)*
> in the world of living beings,
> attracts to itself the mind and the five senses,
> born of *prakṛiti.*
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 15:7; cf. BGT*

> Again and again from my *prakṛiti,*
> I send forth this multitude of beings,
> unliberated due to the control of *prakṛiti* over them.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 9:8; cf. BGT*

No embodied soul can ever escape the influence of *prakṛiti:*

> No man can remain without performing action,
> even for a moment.
> The *guṇas* born of *prakṛiti* deprive him of freedom,
> compelling him to act.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 3:5; cf. BGT*

Man may think that he is the doer, but in fact he is a victim of the forces of nature:

> Everywhere, the *guṇas* of *prakṛiti* make all things happen.
> But deluded by egotism, man thinks, "I am the doer."
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 3:27; cf. BGT*

The various schools of Indian philosophy differ in their descriptions of *prakṛiti*. The differences are largely intellectual, and are based upon differences of opinion regarding the relative realities of *prakṛiti, purusha, māyā,* the *guṇas,* the *jīva, Brahman* and *Īshvara.* Swāmī Nikhilānanda writes:

> The *Sānkhya* philosophers describe the universe as the modification of *prakṛiti* or Nature. According to them the cause manifests itself in the effect.... *Prakṛiti*, or primordial matter, includes everything – inorganic, organic and psychic.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS pp.48, 70*

Prakṛiti is often identified with *māyā,* the source of all illusion, although *prakṛiti* is more specifically the "material out of which the universe has been created". It is the fabric from which the patterns of *māyā* are woven. It says in the *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad:*

> Know *prakṛiti* to be *māyā,*
> and the great Lord to be the master of *māyā.*
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> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 4:10*

Swāmī Nikhilānanda clarifies:

> Vedantists use such terms as *avidyā, ajñāna* and *prakṛiti* as practically synonymous with *māyā.* The word *māyā* generally signifies the cosmic illusion on account of which *Brahman,* or pure consciousness, appears as the Creator of the universe. Under the influence of *avidyā* or nescience, *ātman,* or pure consciousness, appears as the *jīva,* or individualized self. *Ajñāna* is the ignorance which makes the Absolute appear as the relative or the One as many. The word *prakṛiti* (matter or Nature) is used to denote *māyā* as the material out of which the universe has been created. But in actual practice these distinctions are not always maintained. The words are often interchanged.
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Prakṛiti is dealt with more extensively in *Sānkhya* than other systems, and is the basis of the description which follows. According to *Sānkhya, prakṛiti,* as primordial matter, is the 'uncaused cause' of the physical and mental universe. It is distinct from and independent of *purusha* (spirit, the Self), the unchanging principle of intelligence. Even time and space are aspects of *prakṛiti* and not independent entities. *Prakṛiti* is energy or material substance in subtle form. The *antaḥkaraṇa* (human mind), the senses and matter are products of the same essential cause, the uncaused *prakṛiti.*

The consciousness of mind is a reflected intelligence, borrowed from *purusha,* which is pure consciousness. The *antaḥkaraṇa* appears intelligent, but the real principle of intelligence is *purusha,* just as a mirror on the wall is, essentially, no different from the wall. It only reflects an image.

The three *guṇas* are the material constituents of *prakṛiti* and the universe is a transformation of *prakṛiti. Prakṛiti* has been defined as the sum of all

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The three *guṇas* are the material constituents of *prakṛiti* and the universe is a transformation of *prakṛiti*. *Prakṛiti* has been defined as the sum of all the three *guṇas* in a state of equilibrium. It is disturbance in the balance of these three forces which leads to evolution or emanation *(sarga)* of the unmanifest *prakṛiti* into the manifest universe. This disturbance is brought about by an external influence – the *purusha.*

The transformation and change, however, is not in the essential *prakṛiti* itself, but only in its manifest aspects. The diversity of the universe 'evolves' out of the unity of *prakṛiti.* It then returns to *prakṛiti.* The primary essence of nature thus remains the same, whatever the variations in its expression. In the absolute sense, there has been no creation, and there will be no destruction. The present universe is but one of a series of creations. These have existed in the past, and will come into being in the future. Nothing is 'added' in the process of evolution. Effects exist only because of transformations of the cause. The whole of the effect exists potentially in the cause. The only condition for the fulfilment of the process of evolution is the removal of barriers. The power to remove barriers exists in the nature of the *guṇas. Sattva* is the essence to be realized; *tamas* is the barrier; and *rajas* is the power by which the barrier can be removed.

The first product of the process of evolution is *mahat* (*lit.* the great one), the cosmic apparatus by which the intelligence of *purusha* – the basis of individual intelligence – is reflected downwards into creation.

The next product is *buddhi,* the individual apparatus whereby the intelligence of *purusha* is reflected. In *Sānkhya, buddhi* is the storehouse of all subconscious impressions.

The next product is *ahankāra,* the sense of personal identity or ego.

The twenty-four products of *prakṛiti,* plus *prakṛiti* itself, are known as the twenty-five *prakṛitis.* They are listed as follows:

1	*prakṛiti* (the primal seed of nature)
2	*mahat* (cosmic intelligence)
3	*buddhi* (intellect)
4	*ahankāra* (human identity)
5	*manas* (mind)
6–10	*jñānendriyas* (sense organs) (5)
11–15	*karmendriyas* (motor organs) (5)
16–20	*tanmātras* (essences) (5)
21–25	*bhūtas* or *tattvas* (elements) (5)

Systems other than *Sānkhya* calculate the twenty-five *prakṛitis* as the interaction of the five *tattvas* against each other, again making twenty-five products in all:

1.	*Ākāsh* (ether)	Desires, anger, bashfulness, fear, infatuation.
2.	*Vāyu* (air)	Running, walking, smelling, contracting, expanding.

3.	*Agni* (fire)	Hunger, thirst, sleep, personality, laziness.
4.	*Jala* (water)	Vital fluid, blood, fat, urine, saliva.
5.	*Pṛithvī* (earth)	Bones, flesh, skin, veins, hair.

According to *Sānkhya,* subtle bodies as well as gross are also a product of *prakṛiti.* All impressions are stored there. The subtle body continues after death, and these impressions determine future births. The subtle body consists of the *guṇas.* As the effort is directed into proper channels, *sattva* comes to predominate, with purity and tranquillity. The *purusha* is then able to free itself. This becomes possible after the gross body dies. Thus *prakṛiti* brings about both bondage and liberation: bondage when the *purusha* identifies itself with *prakṛiti,* and liberation when, as a result of the 'evolutionary' process, the *purusha* is detached from *prakṛiti.*

The liberation of *purusha* is thus the ultimate purpose for which *prakṛiti* evolves. As *prakṛiti* is not sentient, it cannot be conscious of pursuing this goal. Thus, 'evolution' is not a continuous progress in one direction. Like everything else in creation, it is subject to the cyclical influences of the *guṇas.*

Descriptions of *prakṛiti* vary between *Advaita Vedānta, Dvaita Vedānta, Vishishṭa Advaita,* and the other Vedantic schools. The differences are largely of academic or scholarly interest. The *māyā* of *Advaita Vedānta,* for example, seems to correspond with the *prakṛiti* of *Sānkhya,* but *māyā* is an appearance, when contrasted with *Brahman,* and is dependent upon it for existence. In *Sānkhya,* however, *prakṛiti* is said to be real, independent of *purusha.*

In mythology, *prakṛiti* is represented as a goddess, the personification of cosmic will or energy in the evolutionary process.

The metaphysical descriptions of *Vedānta,* based largely upon variant interpretations of the *Upanishads* and other Hindu texts, are not without relevance to modern scientific descriptions of the physical universe. In their study of the material world, scientists have realized the tremendous degree of order and organization to be found both in inanimate matter and in living creatures. Physical matter or energy and the laws which appear to govern it are deeply ordered and integrated – from the activities within atoms and molecules to the arrangement of the planets, stars and galaxies.

The bodies of living creatures are ordered and organized to an even greater extent. Each second, hundreds of thousands of interactions take place within the substance of each cell of every living creature. Their bodies can consist of billions of these cells, all working together in integrated harmony. The degree of organized activity within living bodies is quite incredible.

Additionally, nature itself behaves as a self-supporting and seemingly self-organizing system. Scientists talk of ecosystems and the planetary ecosystem in which all creatures rely upon each other for their livelihood and survival. From a physical point of view, living creatures are usually considered only as their physical bodies. These physical bodies, however, are only a reflection or crystallization of their inner mental nature and their quality of consciousness. This is administered through the particular configurations of the subtle *tattvas* comprising each creature. Each creature thus occupies a particular niche in physical nature according to its mental characteristics. Consequently, what scientists call a physical ecosystem or the balance of nature is actually – at a higher level – a balance of mind and subtle mental essences and characteristics.

Prakṛiti is the supremely subtle pattern, blueprint or essence of all this order in the physical universe. The order and integration arises automatically when the one Power of God, the Word or *Shabd,* is first split and divided by the universal mind. This complex, subtle essence, containing in seed form all that lies below, is known as *prakṛiti.*

See also: **guṇa**.

pralaya (S/H), **parlay**, **parlo** (Pu) *Lit.* dissolution, reabsorption, annihilation, destruction; from *pralī* (to become dissolved, reabsorbed into, disappear, perish, die); especially, periodic dissolution of the universe, according to traditional Indian cosmology, which describes the creation as being subject to a cycle of creation and dissolution.

All things operate in cycles, and are liable to change. Everything has a birth, an existence and a death. Only God is eternal and changeless. Birth and death, growth and decay, day and night, expansion and contraction, in-breathing and out-breathing are all fundamental aspects of the creation. The physical human body also undergoes its own dissolution when its span of life is over. The subtle microcosmic centres *(chakras)* dissolve as the pranic life current is withdrawn and the body 'dis-integrates'. This principle applies not only to small affairs, but also to cosmic cycles. Not only are human beings born to die, but so are planets, suns, galaxies, and even the entire cosmos. It can be concluded from observation alone that this kind of change is a fundamental aspect of physical existence, great or small, over short or long periods of time.

According to Hindu cosmology, the creation also has its out-breathings and its in-breathings. It is created and dissolved over vast aeons of time:

> The beginning and the end of the world is only His one breath, the duration of which is numberless years. During this one breath, myriads of beings have been born, have lived and have died, and experienced both this world and the next.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK1 p.114*

These aeons of time are defined by Indian sages in multiples of the four *yugas.* According to the *Padma Purāṇa,* one span of these four *yugas* takes 4.32 million years. This is called a *mahāyuga.* At the end of every *mahāyuga,* the world is destroyed by fire and flood, in a cosmological event called *laya* (dissolution). The world is then recreated, and a new cycle of *yugas* begins again with a *satyuga.*

A series of one thousand such cycles or *mahāyugas* (4.32 billion years) is known as a *kalpa* or a day of *Brahmā.* At the end of a day of *Brahmā,* the physical universe and all the heavens up to the unmanifest *Brahman* are dissolved, withdrawing into seed form. As the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* puts it, "At the end of a thousand periods of the four *yugas,* the earth is for the most part exhausted. A total dearth then ensues, which lasts a hundred years; and in consequence of the failure of food, all beings become languid and exanimate and, at last, entirely perish."[1] This is followed by *pralaya:*

> The duration of one thousand *yugas* is called a day of *Brahmā.* When that day is over, … *Kāl,* the lord of being, becoming the five elements, seeing the (imminent) death of all beings, of deities, of all *brāhmaṇas,* of *daityas,* demons, *yakshas,* goblins and birds, of *gandharvas,* celestial nymphs and serpents, of mountains, rivers and birds, … and also of lower animals, insects and flies, brings about a great dissolution *(pralaya)* to bring about the ending of the world.
>
> *Padma Purāṇa, Srishṭikhaṇḍa 1:39.43–47; cf. PP2 p.509*

After a period of quiescence lasting a similar period of time (a night of *Brahmā*), another universe is created. One day and one night of *Brahmā* thus span 8.64 billion years. These cycles are implied in the *Bhagavad Gītā* when Kṛishṇa says:

> At the dawning of a day (of *Brahmā*),
> the entire universe is manifest out of the Unmanifest.
> When night falls,
> it dissolves again into the Unmanifest.
>
> O son of Pārtha, again and again, all living beings –
> brought into existence at the dawn of the day –
> are helplessly dissolved with the coming of the night.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 8:18–19; cf. BGT*

Kṛishṇa also speaks of the way in which all souls are absorbed in *prakṛiti* at the time of dissolution. The souls are absorbed in *prakṛiti,* and so too are the many, varied and constantly changing bodily forms that make up creation. But after the period of dissolution is over, they are once more recreated:

At the end of a *kalpa,*
all beings return to my nature *(prakṛiti).*
Again, at the start of a cycle,
I bring them out again.
Again and again from my nature *(prakṛiti),*
I send forth this multitude of beings,
unliberated due to the control of nature *(prakṛiti)* over them.

But these activities do not bind me,
because I remain detached, like one who is unconcerned.
With me as director and controller,
nature *(prakṛiti)* gives birth to this vast universe
of the living and inert.
This is how the wheel of creation revolves.

Bhagavad Gītā 9:7–10; cf. BGT

Every one hundred years of *Brahmā* (a lifetime of *Brahmā*), the *Padma Purāṇa* continues, *Brahmā* himself is dissolved. This is described as *mahā pralaya.* Then, after a period as long as the life of *Brahmā,* another *Brahmā* is born, and so the cycles continue. A year of *Brahmā* contains 360 days and nights of *Brahmā.* Thus, according to the *Padma Purāṇa, mahā pralaya* takes place after 4,320,000 x 2 x 360 x 100 (311,040,000,000,000) human years, this being the lifetime of *Brahmā.*

The *Padma Purāṇa* further divides each day of *Brahmā* into fourteen *manvantaras,* in each of which a great sage or Manu appears for the guidance of mankind:

> A thousand such *chaturyugas* (cycles of the four *yugas*) are said to make a day of *Brahmā.* Fourteen Manus (sages) appear during the course of one such day of *Brahmā….* The period of Manu and gods is called a *manvantara,* and is enumerated to form seventy-one *chaturyugas….* The day of *Brahmā* is fourteen times this period. At the end of this day, there is *Brahmā*'s reabsorption (of the creation) called *naimittika.* At that time, all the three worlds like *bhū, bhuva* are consumed….
>
> At the end of the night which is of the same measure (as the day), he *(Brahmā)* again brings the creation into being. Such is the year of *Brahmā* and likewise are his one hundred years.
>
> *Padma Purāṇa 1:3.12, 22; cf. PP1 p.18*

There is no unanimity of opinion as to the number and duration of *manvantaras.* There are also discrepancies. For the mathematics of the *Padma Purāṇa* to be strictly accurate, there would actually be just under 71½ *manvantaras* per day of *Brahmā.* It is stated that within each *kalpa* are fourteen *manvantaras* of equal duration, with long intervals between them. Sometimes it is also added that each succeeding *manvantara* is progressively shorter than the one before. Yet another version says each *manvantara* contains 71 *mahāyugas.* The confusion is further compounded by an account which states that the first Manu presided over the first *mahāyuga,* the second and third Manus over the second *mahāyuga,* the fourth, fifth and sixth Manus over the third *mahāyuga,* and so on. Such statements defy logic; hence, it is not possible to say with mathematical certainty the exact duration of a *manvantara.* Moreover, in Buddhism, *kalpas* are not of equal duration.

Saints have confirmed the general principles of creation and dissolution. Guru Amardās says:

> The creation *(utpati)* and deluge (*parlo,* dissolution)
> occur through the Lord's Word *(Shabd).*
> Through the Word *(Shabd),* the creation evolves again.
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 117, MMS*

Recent Indian Saints, such as Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh and the *Gurus* following him, have described *pralaya* as extending up to the region they call *trikuṭī,* which they identify with *Brahm* or *Brahman,* also called the universal mind. The three worlds of the mind (physical, astral and causal) function as one integral system and thus, when *piṇḍa* is dissolved, the entire creation up to and including *trikuṭī* (universal mind) also comes to an end. The Saints also say that *mahā pralaya* includes *Brahman* and the realms beyond the mind *(sunn, mahā sunn* and *bhanwar guphā),* up to but not including the eternity of God *(sat lok). Pralaya* and *mahā pralaya* are thus the greatest cycles or rhythms in creation:

> Now I will give you an account of the dissolution *(pralaya)* of the universe; since I have witnessed the withdrawal of the universe. *Kāl* seizes all creatures and they merge in his breath (essence).
>
> The earth was made for bodies and all bodies it absorbs. Water dissolves earth in itself and fire dries up the water. Fire is absorbed into air, and air takes on the form of ether *(ākāsh). Ākāsh* merges into *māyā;* darkness prevails everywhere, and nothing can be seen.
>
> *Māyā* then merges into *Brahm;* that is, *Shakti* merges into *Shiva. Shiva* is then assimilated into *Onkār,* and *Onkār* is absorbed upwards into the door of *sunn. Sunn* is then assimilated into *mahā sunn* and *mahā sunn* into *bhanwar guphā.* Up to this point can dissolution *(pralaya, i.e. mahā pralaya)* occur, but very rarely. This is the gateway to *sat lok.*
>
> Dissolution *(pralaya)* never goes beyond this, O brother! It never

> enters into *sat lok*. *Kāl* destroys the three worlds, and then *Mahā Kāl* devours *Kāl*. The *Mahā Kāl* reaches up to *sat lok*. But beyond this, he cannot go and so he remains outside.
>
> Now I have described dissolution *(pralaya)* and grand dissolution *(mahā pralaya)*.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 23:1.48–61, SBP p.199*

At the time of *pralaya*, souls are drawn up to a point beyond the reach of dissolution, where they await the dawn of a new creation. Mahārāj Charan Singh explains:

> Dissolution *(pralaya)* means when the whole world comes to an end. Then all souls go to the third region *(sunn)*. And grand dissolution *(mahā pralaya)* is when all souls remain between the fourth and the fifth region *(sat lok)* till the creation starts again. But the soul never dies.
>
> *Mahārāj Charan Singh, Thus Saith the Master 293, TSM p.318*

He also explains the limitations of language and intellect in trying to understand such cosmic processes:

> By dissolution *(pralaya)* is meant the end of the physical universe. Grand dissolution *(mahā pralaya)* is the absorption of everything, even beyond the astral plane, back into its origin. The final dissolution when He is finished with this 'play', when and if the whole creation ceases, will be when everything is merged back into Him, the source of everything. Saints have tried to explain this to us through the medium of language, but the intellect cannot comprehend all this, so we should not get confused. The Saints do not want us to get entangled by thinking about these things. We should concern ourselves only about this physical universe, and make use of the means which the Lord has provided for our escape from it, and our ultimate return to Him.
>
> *Mahārāj Charan Singh, The Master Answers 373, MA p.396*

See also: **aṇḍa** (4.1), **guṇa**, **pralaya**, **yuga**.

1. *Vishṇu Purāṇa* 6:3, in *HMP* p.631.

purush(a) (S/H) *Lit.* being, spirit; used in a variety of contexts in Indian mystical expression, both general and specific. In the *Vedas, purusha* means man, male or, collectively, mankind. In some mystic literature, *purush* is used in reference to God, as in *Sat Purush* (the true Being). It also appears in expressions denoting the beings who rule the heavenly realms, as in *Kāl Purush.*

In the *Sānkhya* school of philosophy, *purusha* is consciousness, *per se.* It is 'being' as opposed to *prakṛiti,* which is primal nature, the primal and subtle blueprint of matter. *Purusha* is the essence of consciousness, being or spirit around which *prakṛiti* weaves the web of forms or bodies. *Purusha* is thus depicted as the 'male' energy which provides the central focus of life and being to which is given the vehicle of bodies and forms by the 'female' energy of *prakṛiti.* Swāmī Nikhilānanda explains the difference and interplay between *prakṛiti* and *purusha:*

> According to them (*Sānkhya* philosophers), there are two ultimate categories, namely, *purusha* and *prakṛiti.* The *purushas* or *ātmans,* devoid of parts and attributes, are of the very nature of consciousness. There are as many *purushas* as there are bodies. *Prakṛiti,* or nature, non-dual, undifferentiated, insentient, and dull, consists of the three *guṇas: sattva, rajas* and *tamas,* which are the principles of serenity, activity, and dullness, respectively. *Prakṛiti* is activated by the very proximity of the *purusha.* It evolves into (manifests as) the *buddhi* (intellect), I-consciousness *(ahankāra),* sense organs *(indriyas),* etc.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, on Gauḍapāda, Kārikā 3:5 on Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, U2 p.283*

In *Vedānta, purusha* is used in the sense of the personal being or animating force within both living creatures and in the higher realms. It is the soul as well as the ruler, deity, lord or focus of consciousness in higher realms. *Purusha* thus refers to *Brahman,* the absolute Reality, as in the *Kaṭha Upanishad:*

> Subtler than the senses are the *tattvas* (elemental states of matter);
> Subtler than the *tattvas* is the mind *(manas);*
> Subtler than the mind is the understanding *(buddhi).*
> Beyond the understanding is the higher Self *(Mahān ātmā);*
> Beyond the *mahat* (cosmic mind) is the Unmanifest;
> Beyond the Unmanifest is the Supreme Being *(Purusha);*
> Beyond the *Purusha* there is nothing:
>   that is the end, the supreme Goal.
>
> *Kaṭha Upanishad 1:3.10–11*

The same equivalence is made in the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad:*

> To that pupil who has duly approached him,
> whose mind is completely serene,
> and whose senses are controlled,
> the wise teacher should indeed
> rightly impart the knowledge of *Brahman,*
> through which one knows the immutable and the true *Purusha....*
>
> He is the self-luminous and formless *Purusha,*
> uncreated and existing both within and without.
> He is devoid of *prāṇa,* devoid of mind,
> pure, and higher than the supreme Imperishable.
>
> *Muṇḍaka Upanishad 1:2.13, 2:1.2, U1 pp.278, 280*

The other *Upanishads* say the same:

> Know Him, the *Purusha,* who alone is to be known,
> and in whom the parts rest firm,
> like the spokes in the nave of a wheel,
> that death may not affect you.
>
> *Prashna Upanishad 6:6, U2 p.196*

> The entire universe is filled by the *Purusha* –
> He who stands alone, firm as a tree,
> established in His own glory.
> There is nothing higher or lower,
> nothing smaller or greater....
>
> He, indeed, is the great *Purusha,*
> the Lord who inspires the mind
> to reach the state of purity.
> He is the Ruler, the imperishable Light.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 3:9, 12*

In *Advaita Vedānta,* the *ātman* (soul) is considered to be identical with *Brahman.* Thus, the soul in the body is said to be *Brahman* or "*Purusha,* of the size of a thumb":

> The *Purusha,* the size of a thumb,
> dwells in the body.
> By knowing Him, the Lord of the past and the future,
> thenceforward, all fear ceases.
> This, verily, is That....

The *Purusha*, the size of a thumb,
  the inner Self, always dwells in the hearts of men.
One should draw it out from one's body with perseverance,
  as one separates the central stalk from a reed.
One should know it as the bright, as the immortal –
  truly, as the bright, as the immortal.

Kaṭha Upanishad 2:1.12, 2:3:17

It is the supreme *Purusha* who is manifest as the seemingly individual soul or *ātman:*

> He (the *ātman*), verily, it is who sees, feels, hears, smells, tastes, thinks and knows. He is the Doer, the intelligent Self, the *Purusha*. He is established in the Highest, the imperishable *Ātman*.
>
> *Prashna Upanishad 4:9, U2 p.184*

In the *Purusha Sūkta* of the *Ṛig Veda, Purusha* is depicted as a cosmogonic figure, a creative source, the Cosmic Being or Primal Man who contains the whole earth within himself, and who represents the whole of everything. A macrocosmic-microcosmic symbolism is clearly intended:

A thousand-headed is the Man *(Purusha)*
  with a thousand eyes, a thousand feet;
Encompassing the earth on all sides,
  he exceeded it by ten fingers' breadth.

The Man *(Purusha)*, indeed, is this All,
  what has been and what is to be,
  the Lord of the immortal spheres,
  which he surpasses by consuming food.

Such is the measure of his might,
  and greater still than this is Man *(Purusha)*.
All beings are a fourth of him,
  three-fourths are the immortal in heaven.

Three-fourths of Man *(Purusha)* ascended high,
  one fourth took birth again down here.
From this, he spread in all directions
  into animate and inanimate things.

From him, the Shining One *(Virāj)* was born;
From this Shining One *(Virāj)*,
  Man *(Purusha)* again took birth.

As soon as born, he extended himself
  all over the earth, both behind and before.

Using the Man *(Purusha)* as their oblation,
  the gods performed the sacrifice.
Spring served them for the clarified butter,
  Summer for the fuel, and Autumn for the offering.

This evolved Man *(Purusha),* then first-born,
  they besprinkled on the sacred grass.
With him, the gods performed the sacrifice,
  as did also the heavenly beings and seers.

From this sacrifice, fully accomplished,
  was gathered curd mixed with butter.
Thence came the creatures of the air,
  beasts of the forest and the village.

From this sacrifice, fully accomplished,
  were born the hymns and the melodies;
From this were born the various metres;
From this were born the sacrificial formulas.

From this were horses born, all creatures
  such as have teeth in either jaw;
From this were born the breeds of cattle;
From this were born sheep and goats.

When they divided up the Man *(Purusha),*
  into how many parts did they divide him?
What did his mouth become? What his arms?
What are his legs called? What his feet?

His mouth became the *brāhmaṇ;*
His arms became the warrior-prince,
  his legs, the common man who plies his trade.
The lowly serf was born from his feet.

The moon was born from his mind;
The sun came into being from his eye;
From his mouth came *Indra* and *Agni,*
  while from his breath the wind was born.

From his navel issued the air;
From his head unfurled the sky,
  the earth from his feet,
  from his ear the four directions.
Thus have the worlds been organized.

Seven were the sticks of the enclosure,
  thrice seven the fuel sticks were made,
  when the gods, performing the sacrifice,
  bound the Man *(Purusha)* as the victim.

With the sacrifice the gods sacrificed to the sacrifice.
Those were the first established rites.
These powers ascended up to heaven
  where dwell the ancient gods and other beings.

Purusha Sūkta, Ṛig Veda 10:90, VE pp.75–76

The Supreme Being is represented as at once concrete (thousand-headed, thousand-eyed) and in the abstract, beyond relationship to anything else, utterly transcendent. Everything is a part of the one, unique *Purusha.* Within him is contained the whole of creation, not only in space, but also in time (what has been and what will be). That only one quarter of him is manifest is a way of saying that the unmanifested aspect is immortal, concealed and unchangeable, and that temporal life is therefore only a small part of man.

From the *Purusha,* proceeds *Virāj* (the Shining One), the first divine, uncreated, emanation; and *Virāj,* likewise, gives birth to the *Purusha,* the two being united in an inextricable oneness. First-born are the gods who inwardly worship the cosmic *Purusha,* their worship being metaphorically described as a sacrifice in which the *Purusha* participates. As a consequence, the various parts of the universe, animate and inanimate, emerge from the different 'bodily' parts of the cosmic *Purusha.* All things animate and inanimate arise from him: the elements, animals, men, cosmic powers like *Indra* and *Agni,* and the *Vedas* themselves. The process of creation is depicted as an act of self-sacrifice on his part. The hymn signifies the divine transcendence which invests all creation, and his aloofness from it; it portrays the downward movement of the All towards the earth and the upward movement of the world towards the All.

The imagery of the creation being formed out of the body of a macrocosmic Man is echoed in a number of mystical traditions. It appears, for example, as the *Adam Kadmon* of Jewish mysticism, as well as in some of the gnostic texts.

See also: **Adam Kadmon, prakṛiti.**

rachanā (S/H), **rachnā** (Pu) *Lit.* creation, cosmos; cosmogony. Mystics say that the creation is illusory and evanescent. It forms and disappears like bubbles in water, as enduring as a wall of sand:

> As the bubble ever appears and disappears on water,
> so was the creation *(rachnā)* of the world made:
> Says Nānak, hearken thou, O friend of mine.
>
> *Guru Tegh Bahādur, Ādi Granth 1427, MMS*

> Totally false is the structure of the world (*rachnā,* creation).
> Know thou this, O my friend:
> says Nānak, like the wall of sand, it remains not permanent.
>
> *Guru Tegh Bahādur, Ādi Granth 1428, MMS*

rajas (S), **rajoguṇ(a)** (S/H) *Lit.* the attribute *(guṇa)* of activity *(rajas);* the positive *guṇa* of energy, activity and creativity, and also of the future; from *raj* (to be coloured, to be attached).

Rajas incites to incessant motion, forcing all things to move, being described in the *Bhagavad Gītā* as both mobile and stimulating:

> Know *rajas* as the source of passions,
> the origin of desire and attachment.
> It binds the soul tightly by entangling it in *karma....*
>
> Avarice, turning outward,
> ceaseless planning and activity,
> restlessness, desire for enjoyment –
> These arise when *rajas* prevails.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 14:7, 12; cf. BGT*

It is on account of *rajas* that fire spreads – whether the physical condition of fire or its expression in the mental passion of anger – the wind blows, the senses follow their objects and the mind becomes active and restless.

Rajas brings into being and excites to action, while *tamas* brings quiescence leading to torpor, and decay leading to death. These two *guṇas* are responsible for the interplay of duality that are found in all aspects of creation, within the mind worlds. *Rajas* is hot and heat; *tamas* is cold and coldness. *Rajas* is birth and movement; *tamas* is death and inertia.

The characteristics of the *guṇas* have often been applied to an understanding of the best diet for those seeking spiritual enlightenment. The food a person takes greatly affects his mood, temperament and general way of being and behaviour. Extreme instances, where even the dullest-minded person is aware of the effect, are mind-affecting substances such as alcohol and other drugs. But everything taken into the body will affect it in one way or another and to a greater or lesser extent.

See also: **guṇa**.

sā'ah (A), **sā'at** (P) *Lit.* hour, time; as also in the Persian expression, *bī-sā'atī* (no time, timelessness). Like many other mystics, Sufis have pointed out that time does not exist in the realm of Reality. Time *(sā'ah)* and change are inextricably intertwined. In the physical creation, everything is transitory and subject to change, and is hence regarded as illusion. Truth or Reality *(Ḥaqq)*, in the mystic sense, means that which is not subject to change.

True understanding of the eternity beyond time is a matter of mystical experience. Thus, Rūmī relates the story of a soul *(jān)* who, at the time of meditation, steps out of the body, and of the realm in which time *(sā'at)* reigns:

> When I had been a part of that elect company
>   for some time *(sā'at)*, engaging in meditation,
>   stepping out of myself, at that very time *(sā'at)*
>   my spirit *(jān)* was freed from time *(sā'at)* –
>   the time *(sā'at)* that makes the young old.
> All change arises from time *(sā'at)*:
>   he that is free from time *(sā'at)* is free from change.
> When for a time *(sā'at)*, you escape from time *(sā'at)*,
>   'how and why' remain no longer:
> You become familiar with that which has no 'how' or 'why'.
> Time *(sā'at)* is not acquainted with timelessness *(bī-sā'atī)*,
>   because only wonder and awe can lead to it.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:2072–76; cf. MJR4 p.116*

See also: **jihah**, **makān** (4.1).

sattva guṇa (S), **satoguṇ(a)** (H/Pu) *Lit.* the attribute *(guṇa)* of goodness *(sattva)*; the *guṇa* of goodness, purity, truth, rhythm, harmony and balance; the point of balance or equilibrium from which the other two *guṇas* of activity *(rajas)* and inertia *(tamas)* come into existence:

> Duty which falls naturally to one's lot,
>   performed without hankering for its fruit,
>   devoid of attachment,
>   without attraction or aversion –
> That is said to be born of *sattva*.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 18:23*

The *guṇas* are present in every aspect of life and creation within the three worlds of the mind. In matter itself, in personality, emotion and quality of thought, in the laws and principles of nature, in subtle matter and its administration, in the astral and causal realms – everything that moves and is differentiated is permeated and activated by the activity and tension generated between the three *guṇas.*

In human nature, *sattva guṇa* produces good and balanced characteristics or virtues such as compassion, righteousness and devotion, illumination like mental or intellectual discrimination and higher consciousness, and happiness in the form of contentment, satisfaction, joy and bliss.

See also: **guṇa**.

satyug(a) (H), **satjug** (Pu), **satyayuga** (S) *Lit.* age *(yuga)* of truth *(sat);* the first of the four *yugas* or ages of Hindu cosmology; also called *kṛitayuga.*

See also: **yuga**.

sāyah (P) *Lit.* shadow. In mystical terms, each level of the creation is a shadow, a reflection or a projection of the level above it. The physical world is a shadow or a shadow of a shadow:

> *Sāyah* in *Ṣūfī* language denotes Reality's shadow or silhouette, which is like a skin or shell.
>
> *Ja'far Sajjādī, FLI p.456*

Rūmī also speaks of the shadows of illusion which envelop the mind:

> Just as intellects are bewildered by my madness,
> I am bewildered by the frozen state of these intellects.
> Ice enveloped by shadow *(sāyah)* will not melt –
> it cannot see the rays of my shining sun.
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 1740:18256–57, KSD4 p.69, KDS1 p.657, in SPL p.229*

The perfect Saint has also been described as the Shadow of God.

See also: **Sāyah** (▸2).

shemittot (He) (sg. *shemittah*) *Lit.* omission (of debts), remission, release; an agricultural sabbatical (every seventh) year when land was allowed to lie fallow, a practice taught in the Bible; used by medieval Jewish philosophers to refer to cosmic cycles; from *shamat* (to let something drop or slip, to let a field lie fallow).

The mystical understanding of the *shemittot* may have its source in some elements of the *Aggadah* (narrative portions of the *Midrash* and *Talmud*), such as the statement of Rav Katina in the *Babylonian Talmud* that the world would last for 6000 years and be destroyed in the seventh millennium.[1] The 6000 years represent six days of a great cosmic week, at the end of which the creation 'rests', and is destroyed. It is also mentioned in the *Midrash* (commentary) that the world has been created and destroyed many times.

It is probable that this idea developed after contact with astrological and mystical ideas from Greek and Arabic systems, which were taught in Spain and other Muslim countries. A Jew named Abraham bar Ḥiyya, in his *Megillat ha-Megalleh,* speaks of unnamed "philosophers" who believed in a long, even infinite series of cyclical creations. Some of them, he said, maintained that the world would last for 49,000 years, that each of the seven planets would rule for 7000 years, and that God would then destroy the world and restore it to chaos in the fiftieth millennium, only to subsequently recreate it once again.

Among the Kabbalists of early-thirteenth-century Gerona, in Spain, these ideas evolved further, becoming associated with the doctrine of the *sefirot* (divine emanations or qualities) rather than the planets. 'Ezra ben Solomon of Gerona is reputed to have been the first Kabbalist to have taught that the world passes through several ages or cycles. In his commentary on the *Song of Songs,* he interprets the six days of the week of creation as corresponding to six ages, each age lasting 7000 years. He also places each age in one of the lower six *sefirot* – in accordance with whichever of the divine emanations or aspects of God is predominant during that age. The universe, he believed, is currently passing through the age of judgment, corresponding to the *sefirah* of *Gevurah* or *Din* (Judgment). The previous age was the age of righteousness, a 'golden age', which he places in the *sefirah* of *Ḥesed* (Grace, Mercy).

The *Sefer Temunah (Book of the Vision),* written in about 1250 by an unknown Kabbalist of Gerona, went on to fully articulate the doctrine of cosmic cycles, which strongly influenced subsequent Jewish mystical thought on the subject, though the idea is not taught in the most well known Kabbalist work, the *Zohar.* Speaking of the *Sefer Temunah,* Kabbalah scholar Gershom Scholem explains:

> It deals ... with the different aspects of the *Torah,* not within the history of a single creation such as that recorded in the Bible, but through a series of creations, each of them governed by one of the seven lower *sefirot.* For God's creative Power is exerted in every *sefirah* and in a cosmic cycle or *shemittah,* which is essentially the

> product of that *sefirah.* Each *shemittah* is governed by a different one of God's attributes, and only in the complete series of seven *shemittot,* constituting a Great Jubilee, is the totality of God's creative powers manifested.... Each of these cycles endures for seven thousand years; then, in the fiftieth millennium, the whole of creation returns to the womb of the third *sefirah,* named 'return' or 'penitence', or even, in the opinion of some of the later Kabbalists, to nothingness.
>
> *Gershom Scholem, On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism, OKS p.78*

The *Sefer Temunah* maintains that in each *shemittah* the revelation given by the *Torah* will differ according to the predominating quality of God appropriate for that *shemittah.* Scholem continues:

> The author of the *Book Temunah* was interested chiefly in the three first *shemittot,* governed by the attributes of grace, of severity or judgment, and of mercy. The second *shemittah* is the Creation in which we live. The preceding one was ruled by the law of grace, the infinite stream of divine love, which knew no restrictions or negations.... For the creation of this world of ours, characterized by divine severity, by restriction and judgment, knows evil desires and temptation. Its history could hardly have been otherwise, and so its *Torah,* too, inevitably assumed the form under which we know it today. Hence it contains prohibitions and commandments, and its whole content is the conflict between good and evil....
>
> And along the same lines, he stresses the utopian element, representing a return to the purer forms of the preceding *shemittah,* that will prevail in the third and next cycle. The *Torah* will once again deal only with the pure and holy, the sacrifices prescribed in it will be of a purely spiritual nature, betokening thankful recognition of God's rule, and love of the Creator. There will no longer be any exile, hence no further migration of the soul as in the present aeon. Transformed and transfigured, the evil desire in man will no longer conflict, but will harmonize, with his desire for good.
>
> *Gershom Scholem, On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism, OKS pp.79–80*

Later, the concept of the *shemittot* was expanded further. No longer was the calculation of time restricted to seven 7000–year cycles of time. Time, according to the *Sefer Temunah,* became slower in the seventh millennium. Therefore 50,000 years became a much longer period. There arose numerous predictions concerning the length of the creation, with some Kabbalists predicting that it would endure for an astronomically long period, while others predicted that the process would last for 18,000 jubilees (periods of 50,000 years).

The influence of this teaching on the *shemittot* prevailed among Kabbalists until as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

See also: **jubilee**.

1. *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 97a.

sheviirat ha-kelim (He) *Lit.* breaking *(sheviirat)* of the vessels *(kelim);* a term first used by Rabbi Isaac Luria of sixteenth-century Safed to describe the great cosmic tragedy of the descent of the divine Light into exile in the realm of gross matter.

In Luria's elaborate description of the creation process, the *Ayn-Sof* (the Infinite), the primal divine Light Itself, withdrew or contracted into Itself through a process he called *ẓimẓum.* This created a vacuum into which the *Ayn-Sof* projected the forces whose interplay produced the creation. Before this contraction happened, all the divine forces or aspects had existed within the *Ayn-Sof* in undifferentiated harmony.

With the activity of *ẓimẓum,* the roots of the divine quality of stern Judgment *(Din)* became separated from divine Mercy *(Ḥesed);* thus, the potential for matter, and consequently evil (understood as the absence of spirit, of light) became possible and inevitable. Additionally, a residue of the divine light of the *Ayn-Sof,* called the *reshimu* (traces), was left behind in the vacuum.

The third element in the drama was a ray from the *Ayn-Sof* which was projected into the vacuum to serve as a link between the vacuum and the *Ayn-Sof.* This ray was called the divine or cosmic 'measure *(kav ha-midah)*'. This ray is now engaged in an eternal and constant struggle to bring harmony between the otherwise opposite qualities of stern Judgment and the traces of light *(reshimu).* The action of the *kav ha-midah,* which may also be called the divine will or order, finds resonance at every level of creation, in trying to create harmony and unity out of duality. This is the Power which biblical texts called Wisdom, the Word or the Holy Name. Thus, the *kav ha-midah* is a measure of the divine mercy which makes possible an ultimate reunion with the Lord.

The Lurianic system describes the projection of the primal ray of light or divine will *(Ayn-Sof)* into the form of the *Adam Kadmon* (the Primal or archetypal Man), and from there into the creation. In this way, Luria describes the creation of the macrocosm which generates the creation. First, the primal divine light of the Godhead, which is undifferentiated and all-pervading, projects itself as *Adam Kadmon,* at the highest level of the *Ayn-Sof.* Then, in the realm of *aẓilut,* ten *sefirot* (emanations or qualities) are emanated.

The physical qualities of the creation, as well as the mental and spiritual qualities of man, are all projections of the ten *sefirot.* These lights shine through the form of *Adam Kadmon* and give rise to the creation. The lights shining from *Adam Kadmon*'s 'ears', 'nose' and 'mouth' create a structure that is in total balance: the emanations of the *sefirot* are in total harmony. As such, they require no special vessels to contain them. However, the lights emanating from the 'eyes' of *Adam Kadmon* emanated in a different manner. Instead of remaining undifferentiated and in harmony, they separated from each other. Their structure thus became unstable or chaotic. Consequently, they required special vessels, or *kelim,* to contain them; these vessels were made of a coarser or thicker light.

All went well with the emanation of the upper three *sefirot* of *Keter, Ḥokhmah* and *Binah* (Crown, Wisdom and Understanding). The process was orderly and the vessels contained the light flowing into them. But then the great 'cosmic catastrophe' happened: 'the breaking of the vessels'. The vessels assigned to contain the lights of the other six *sefirot* from *Ḥesed* to *Yesod* were too weak for the power of this simultaneous emanation, and they shattered. Some of the lights returned to their Source, but some fell into the original *tehiru* (vacuum) in a chaotic manner, becoming attached to the shards (the *kelipot*) of the vessels. From these *kelipot* emanated all evil in the world; they are the source of gross matter.

The entire harmony of the universe thus fell into disharmony. Yet the sparks of light, captured and in exile among the *kelipot,* as well as the *kelipot* themselves, can undergo a restoration or *tikkun.* The light of those sparks gives life to the *kelipot,* just as the soul, though covered in various 'wrappings', still gives life to the body.

It is to this process of *tikkun* that Luria devotes most of his teachings. The process of *shevirat ha-kelim* is a way of describing the origins of evil and the relationship of good and evil, spirit and matter, to each other.

See also: **kelipot**, **niẓoẓot**, **parẓufim**, **tehiru**, **ẓimẓum**.

sitt jihah (A), **shash jihat** (P) *Lit.* the six *(sitt, shash)* directions *(jihat); viz.* left, right, front, rear, above and below (or within and without).

See also: **jihah**.

ṣudūr (A/P) *Lit.* emanation, emission, export, coming forth; mystically, the process of phenomena issuing or coming forth from the divine Unity. The process by which the divine oneness emanates as the multiplicity of creation. Hence, Rūmī says of *ṣudūr:*

> An opposite reveals its opposite in the process of manifestation *(ṣudūr).*
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1133, MJR2 p.63*

See also: **al-Fayḍ al-Aqdas** (2.1).

ṣūrah (A), **ṣūrat** (P) *Lit.* in Arabic, form; in Persian, form, face, visage, countenance, image, outward appearance; mystically, the visible forms of the manifest world. In Sufism, *ṣūrat* is often contrasted with *ma'ná*. *Ma'ná* means 'meaning', but the word is commonly used for the reality or essence within something, as of the soul or spirit within the form of the body, or the divine Spirit hidden within all things, and from which they proceed. Thus, Rūmī says that *Ma'ná* is the source of all forms:

> Know that form *(ṣūrat)* springs from Reality (Spirit, *Ma'ná*)
> as a lion from the thicket,
> or as voice and speech from thought.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1136; cf. MJR2 p.63*

Rūmī also says that all love is actually love for the spirit, the divine 'meaning' within everything. Love for the form is only an appearance, for else, why does love for another's body vanish when the "spirit has fled":

> Give up this belief in phenomena.
> Loves for what is endued with form *(ṣūrat)*
> have not as their object
> the outward form *(ṣūrat)* or the lady's face.
> That which is the object of love is not the form *(ṣūrat),*
> whether it be love for this world or yonder world;
> Else why do you abandon
> that which you have come to love for its form *(ṣūrat)*
> after the spirit *(jān)* has fled?
> Its form *(ṣūrat)* is still there: why then this satiety?
> O lover, inquire who your Beloved really is!
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:702–5; cf. MJR2 p.258*

The realized mystics know that the divine Beloved is the reality behind all form. When that reality is sought, the Beloved is found everywhere:

> The world is but form *(ṣūrat),*
> the Friend its Reality *(Ma'ná).*
> Look to the Reality *(Ma'ná),*
> and everything is the Beloved.
>
> *Mir'āt-i 'Ushshāq, in TAT p.212, in FNI1 p.74; cf. in SSE1 p.100*

See also: **al-ma'ná**.

tajaddud al-amthāl, al- (A), **tajaddud-i amśāl** (P) *Lit.* the renewal *(tajaddud)* of like by like *(amthāl).* A Sufi doctrine of the continuous annihilation and re-creation of the creation, by which is meant that through the divine Word, the creation is new every moment. It is continuously sustained and created in an ultradynamic process. Rūmī says:

> Form was born of the Word *(Sukhun)* and died again:
> the wave drew itself back into the sea.
> Form came forth from Formlessness and returned thither,
> for, "Verily unto Him are we returning."[1]
> Every instant, then, you are dying and returning:
> Muḥammad declared that this world is but a moment....
> Every moment the world is renewed,
> but we live unaware of its renewal.
> Life is ever arriving anew, like water in a stream,
> though in the body it has the appearance of permanence.
> From its swiftness it appears continuous,
> like a spark which you whirl rapidly with your hand.
> If you whirl a firebrand with dexterity,
> it appears to the sight to be a very long line of fire.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1140–42, 1144–47; cf. MJR2 p.64*

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1. *Qur'ān* 2:156.

tamas (S), **tamoguṇ(a)** (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* the attribute *(guṇa)* of darkness *(tamas)* – physical, moral or any other kind; ignorance, error, delusion; one of the three *guṇas;* the third *guṇa* or attribute of destruction, decay, death, inertia, inactivity, quiescence, dullness, ignorance, the past and so on:

> Regarding *tamas,* it is born of ignorance,
> and creates delusion in all incarnate beings.
> It binds the soul with heedlessness, indolence and torpor....
> When *tamas* dominates, lack of intelligence,
> lack of effort, heedlessness and also delusion arise.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 14:8, 13; cf. BGT*

Although often portrayed as negative, *tamas* is an essential aspect of creation, a part of the passage of time, and the pulse and rhythm of nature. The resting phase of winter, for example, is required, before spring can come.

And the indrawing of life in autumn is required to consolidate energy for the next creative or *rajas* period (*i.e.* spring). It is also the breaking-down process in metabolism.

No value judgment is to be attached to the *guṇas*. Plus and minus are both required for a balanced creation. Between them, the three *guṇas* form the warp and the weft of the fabric of life. A person intent upon his spiritual life should strive to attain the point of balance from which the *guṇas* of *rajas* and *tamas* proceed – that is, the peace and harmony of *sattva*. But ultimately, all the *guṇas*, being attributes of the universal mind, are to be transcended before liberation of the soul can be attained.

See also: **guṇa**, **rajas**.

té (dé) (C) *Lit.* power, virtue; the dynamic force of *Tào*, expressed in the physical universe. *Tào* cannot be seen in the physical world, the world of 'ten thousand things'. However, the active power of *Tào* in each object and being is the principle that Taoists call *té*. Each object's identity or unique attributes are manifested through *té*, enlivened by *ch'ì* (breath, life force), and given unique characteristics through the juxtaposition of *yīn* and *yáng*, the principles of duality.

See also: **ch'ì**, **Tào** (3.1), **yīn yáng**.

tehiru (He) *Lit.* vacuum; a term introduced by Rabbi Isaac Luria and used by some later Kabbalists to describe the 'empty space' or vacuum into which the *sefirot* were projected when the initial manifestation of the creation took place. The process of *ẓimẓum* (withdrawal) of the *Ayn-Sof* (the Godhead) created the *tehiru* in which the process of emanation and creation actually happened. It is where the forces of judgment separated from the forces of mercy; where the positive and negative energies first polarized.

See also: **shevirat ha-kelim**, **ẓimẓum**.

tikkun (He) *Lit.* restoration.

See **shevirat ha-kelim**.

tohu va-bohu (He) *Lit.* without form, chaos, desert, wilderness *(tohu)* + void, emptiness, chaos *(bohu);* appears in the creation story at the beginning of

Genesis, translated in a number of ways, and for which a specific meaning has never been determined:

> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth –
> Now the earth had been wild and waste *(tohu va-bohu),*
> darkness over the face of Ocean,
> breath of God hovering over the face of the waters –
> God said: "Let there be light!": and there was light.
> God saw the light: that it was good.
> God separated the light from the darkness.
> God called the light: Day! And the darkness he called: Night!
> There was evening, there was morning: one day.
>
> *Genesis 1:1–5, FBM*

Many commentators have suggested that this term refers to the initial state of chaos that preceded the creation – 'chaos' understood as undifferentiated oneness, complete formlessness, a state in which the potential for life can eventually gestate towards becoming life. Chaos here does not have the sense of destructive confusion and violence that it suggests in modern English.

As an 'answer' to an intriguing metaphysical conundrum, *tohu va-bohu* is the subject of a number of discussions in the *Zohar.* One in particular relates to 'chaos' as the pre-creation state of God. It begins with a discussion of the term *bara,* meaning 'created', which is the second word of the first sentence of *Genesis* (In the beginning, God 'created'):

> "*Bara* (created) is always a word of mystery, closing and not opening." Said Rabbi Jose, "Assuredly it is so, and I have heard the Sacred Lamp (Rabbi Simeon) say the same, to wit, that *bara* is a term of mystery, a lock without a key, and as long as the world was locked within the term *bara* it was not in a state of being or existence. Over the whole, there hovered *tohu* (chaos), and as long as *tohu* dominated, the world was not in being or existence."
>
> *Zohar 1:3b, ZSS1 p.14, JCL*

The *Midrash* and *Zohar* give other interpretations of *tohu va-bohu* as well. Some of the most interesting of these link the term with a state of confusion to be found among the first peoples of the earth and the earth itself. Nothing is as it appears to be. The *Midrash,* for example, explains that the earth and its first inhabitants were "bewildered and confounded *(tohu va-bohu)*" by what would take place in the ages to come. It says that the first people did not know their own true nature. They thought they were as innocent as children, yet events would prove that they were not, and that they too would sin.

The *Midrash* continues by explaining that the earth was confused because she perceived that the fate of people on earth was harsher than that of heavenly beings:

> The beings above (in the heavens) … are nourished by the splendour of the (divine) presence, while those below do not eat if they do not toil.… The beings above and the beings below were created at the same time. Yet the beings above live on, while the beings below die.… (And) the earth foresaw that she was to receive her punishment through Adam, (who came from her).… Hence Scripture: "The earth was bewildered and confounded *(tohu va-bohu)*."[1]
>
> *Midrash Rabbah, Genesis 1:1–2, in BLBR p.8:15*

See also: **dhundhūkār**.

[1] *Genesis* 1:2.

tretāyug(a) (S/H/Pu), **tretājug** (Pu) *Lit.* the triad *(tretā)* + age *(yuga);* from *traya* (three); the second *yuga* following a *kṛita* or *satyuga. Tretā* or *trey* is the name of that side of a dice with three spots. It is the second *yuga* because a throw of three is the second best throw of a dice. Traditional Indian dice are rectangular, the four scoring faces being the long oblong sides.

See also: **yuga**.

utpatti (S/H/Pu), **utpati** (Pu) *Lit.* origination, production, creation, birth, genesis, commencement, evolution; the creation of the universe; creation as opposed to dissolution or *pralaya;* also, the Hindi name for the biblical book of *Genesis.* Mystics say that the One creates all things out of Himself, reabsorbing everything into Himself at the end of a cycle:

> He Himself is true, and true is all that He has made:
> from that Lord has originated the entire creation *(utpati).*
> When it pleases Him, then does He make the expanse:
> if it pleases Him, He becomes (the) One alone *(Ekankār)….*
> Lord, the Creator, is contained in water, the land and the sky:
> in manifold ways, the one Lord *(Ekankār)* has diffused Himself, O Nānak.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 294, 296, MMS*

He does this by means of His Creative Word:

The creation *(utpati)* and deluge *(parlo,* dissolution)
occur through the Lord's Word *(Shabd).*
Through the Word *(Shabd),* the creation evolves again.

Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 117, MMS

vyāpak(a), **vyāpt(a)** (S/H), **vyāpya** (S), **byāpak** (H) *Lit.* pervasive; spread widely, diffusive, comprehensive, extensive, extending over the whole, present in all; from the verb *vyāp* (to spread, to pervade, to penetrate, to permeate); also as *sarvavyāpi* (all-pervading); commonly used in mystic literature to describe the Lord who pervades all hearts and is present in every part of creation:

All faces are His faces,
all heads, His heads,
all necks, His necks.
Dwelling in the secret heart of all beings,
the Lord *(Bhagavān)* is all-pervading *(sarvavyāpi).*
Therefore, He is the omnipresent and gracious One.

Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 3:11

Pervading *(vyāpya)* the entire universe, within and without, *Brahman* shines of Itself, like fire permeating a red-hot iron ball.

Shankara, Ātmabodha 62

The Lord is present in all *(byāpak),*
though the physical forms are all different.
Whether king or pauper or one of low degree,
O Sahajo, the same lamp lights all hearts.

Sahajobāī, Bānī, Ajapā Gāyatrī 8, SBB p.35

wàn wù (wàn wù) (C) *Lit.* ten thousand *(wàn)* objects *(wù);* popularly known as the ten thousand things; the myriad things; the totality of all created things. Taoists believe that at the beginning of creation a purely amorphous state of matter emerged from *Tào,* at first a singularity or *T'ài Chí,* then separating into duality, or *yīn yáng,* whose combinations ultimately brought about Heaven, Earth and man. From this, all the remaining myriad forms of creation, the ten thousand things, were manifested. Lǎo Tzu puts it very simply:

Tào generates one;
One generates two;
Two generates three;
Three generates the ten thousand things *(wàn wù).*

Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 42

See also: **Tào** (2.2), **yīn yáng**.

waqt (A/P/U) (pl. *awqāt*) *Lit.* time, hour, moment; hence also, the present moment, the eternal now; thus, immediate experience. A Sufi saying says that the present moment *(waqt)* is a "cutting sword". Hujwīrī writes:

> The *Shaykhs* have said, "The (present) moment *(waqt)* is a cutting sword," because it is characteristic of a sword to cut, and the (present) moment cuts the root of the future and the past, and obliterates care of yesterday and tomorrow from the heart.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIV; cf. KM p.369*

> The (present) moment *(waqt)* is that whereby a man becomes independent of the past and the future, as, for example, when an influence from God descends into his soul and makes his heart collected *(mujtami')*, he has no memory of the past and no thought of that which is not yet come.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIV; cf. KM p.367*

Rūmī speaks of instructions given to him by his Master to make no delay in writing the *Maśnavī:*

> (He said,) "For the sake of our years of companionship,
> recount one of those sweet ecstasies,
> that earth and heaven may laugh with joy,
> that intellect and spirit and eye
> may increase a hundredfold." …
>
> He said: "Feed me, for I am hungry, and make haste,
> for the (present) moment *(waqt)* is a cutting sword.
> The *Ṣūfī* is the son of the (present) moment *(waqt)*, O comrade:
> it is not the rule of the Way to say 'Tomorrow'.
> Are you not indeed a *Ṣūfī*, then?
> That which is in hand is reduced to naught
> by postponing the payment."
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:126–27, 132–34; cf. MJR2 pp.11*

wŭ hsíng (wŭ xíng) (C) *Lit.* five *(wŭ)* movers or agents *(hsíng);* the five agents or elements of Chinese philosophy, not as static physical substances, but as dynamic interactive forces, energies, subtle influences, movers or interactive agents of transformation. Arising from the interplay of *yīn* and *yáng*, the dual aspects of creation, the *wŭ hsíng* infuse all phenomena and events in the physical universe. They provide a more intricate and diverse mapping of the ebb and flow of *yīn* and *yáng* than is expressed in the simple terms of duality.

The characteristics of *wŭ hsíng* are commonly represented by the inherent properties of water, wood, fire, metal and earth. For example, water flows downward and gives moisture to things; wood grows and bends; fire heats and rises; metal can be forged and shaped; earth represents fertility and stability. Each of the elements gives rise to each other: water gives rise to wood, wood to fire, fire to metal, metal to earth and earth to water. Additionally, the *wŭ hsíng,* in their myriad interactions, also change and transform each other. Thus, water extinguishes fire, fire melts metal, metal breaks wood, wood breaks apart earth, and earth consumes water. In nature, this ceaseless rhythmic cycle of transformation – of creative and destructive energies – is the means of maintaining harmony and equilibrium.

According to early Chinese philosophy, the whole of nature can be seen as an expression of the interaction of the five *wŭ hsíng*. Bearing in mind their characteristics and interrelationships, for instance, various physical phenomena have been grouped in fives. Each aspect or member of each group of five corresponds to one of the *wŭ hsíng.* Chinese medicine, for example, describes five major organs, each organ associated with one element. Additionally, there are five curative modes; each mode also associated with one element. Each of the five musical tones or pitches central to Chinese music correspond to the qualities of one of the five elements. Other popular relationships of *wŭ hsíng* in Chinese folklore are the five directions (north, south, east, west and centre), the five colours, the five tastes and the five emotions.

One of the commonest images used to explain the operation of the five *wŭ hsíng* is the seasons of the year. Water energy is represented by winter, the extreme of contraction or the *yīn* condition. It is full of stored, potential energy, the resting phase of indrawn tranquillity, consideration before action, and the essence of readiness for expansion into life. When in balance and conserved, water energy provides the springboard for the next cycle of activity; when deficient, the next cycle lacks tone, quality or flair. It goes off with a diffused fizz, not a definitive bang. A hard, dry winter brings a vibrant and glorious spring, while a warm, wet winter allows rot and disease to penetrate, creating a general absence of vitality. The vitality itself is not of the water energy, but its expression requires the cyclic indrawing and potential coiling of an extreme *yīn* condition for full expression later on.

Wood is the increased presence of *yáng* that emerges from the extreme *yīn* state of water. It represents spring and birth. It is the rapid development of the embryo and the newly born, the first irrepressible growth of green shoots and leaves from root or branch. It is the energy behind the procreative urge. It is the vital force that initiates creative thought or action, the elation of new growth, the bursting forth of potential.

The fire element is the full manifestation of the *yáng* condition. It is the fullness of summer after spring, the fully manifested outward expression of growth and life. It is the constant and busy hum of insects, the vibrant flowering and growth of plants, the waving of flourishing grasses in the warm summer breeze, the fullness of being and activity.

Metal energy is the time of fruitfulness, of harvest; the nostalgia of autumn, when the fullness of activity and energy begins to recede. There is an automatic shedding of that which has served its purpose. The leaf has drawn the energy of sunlight into the heart and root of the plant, and now dies. Seeds and fruits come to fullness as stored potential energy for the next cycle. Frequently, seeds require the hard frost of winter before they can sprout: the cycle has reached completion with the forming of the seed, but the energy needs deep recoiling and maturing before it can burst forth once again into vigorous new growth.

Earth energy provides balance between the seasons. Earth is that which maintains all that is positive and healthful in each of the four phases. It is the centre of being within each, where energy is not wasted, but used or conserved according to the best requirements of the moment. Each of the other four elements has its own balance. Each element, when manifest in harmony with the others and in its due season, fulfils an essential role in the outworking of life's energies. But the balance in the other four is represented by earth, just as physical earth is a synthesis of water, wood, fire and metal (minerals).

The *wŭ hsíng* represent real aspects of the natural dynamic order of the cosmos. They exist within all life and all energetic processes; each is present within the other. This principle manifests itself in the universe from the smallest entities of the subatomic realm to the movement of galaxies.

See also: **ì**, **tattva** (5.1), **yīn yáng**.

yīn yáng (yīn yáng) (C) *Lit.* recessive, passive, nurturing *(yīn)* and expansive, active, positive *(yáng);* pronounced 'yin-yong'. A Chinese term of pre-Taoist origin, first mentioned in the classic Taoist text, the *Ì Chīng (Book of Changes).* In a world of duality, the existence of one thing automatically implies the existence of its opposite. *Yīn* represents the attributes of the female, of shade and darkness, submission, contraction, passive, negative, nourishing and sustaining, moon, earth, water, cold and so on. *Yáng* typifies the attributes of the male, of sunlight and brightness, dominance, expansion, creative, positive, sun, heaven, fire, heat and so forth. The whole of creation is built on a system of correspondences evolved from the dual complementary aspects of *yīn* and *yáng,* which integrate all aspects of creation that spring forth from the Great Beginning *(T'ài Chí).*

The Taoist concept of duality is not a static polarity of opposites, but an ever fluctuating complementarity of activity or change, which the Taoists call *ì* (change, pronounced 'ee'). In the relationship of *yīn* and *yáng*, the seed of its opposite exists in each event or attribute; thus, the decrease in dominance or intensity of one polarity causes the increase of its complement and *vice versa*. This seesaw of energy results in a continual waxing and waning of relative dominance. The common Chinese saying, *wù chí pì fǎn*, translates loosely as, "When developed to the extreme, all phenomena undergo a reversion process." In effect, when the reversion is complete, its complement arises, forming an endless cycle of living movements.

The infinite interactions of *yīn yáng* are grouped in five categories – the *wǔ hsíng*, the five elements or agents of transformation that exist in all phenomena. They are: earth, wood, metal, fire and water. All changing processes of the universe are due to the interaction and successive dominance of these five elements. Like *yīn yáng*, *wǔ hsíng* are not physical substances or elements *per se*, but rather represent subtle metaphysical forces or modes which infuse all phenomena in the universe. Their names are intended metaphorically and symbolically, not literally.

According to Chinese folklore, the Great Beginning *(T'ài Chí)* produced the universe out of the great void of Nonbeing *(Tào)*. The original, essential force of the creation, the primordial breath *(yüén ch'ì)*, was concentrated in the form of an egg. But at the moment of creation, it emerged from the cosmic ocean of all energy *(Tào)*, and pervaded the universe as an invisible 'breath' or energy *(ch'ì)*.

The expression of *Tào* in the physical world is through *té* – the active power of *Tào* in every creature and object. The movement of *Tào* in the creation, through *té*, is an alternating cycle of *yīn* and *yáng* properties where the breath or life force of *ch'ì* is continually solidifying and dispersing. The *ch'ì* which moves and expands is *yáng* in nature, while the *ch'ì* which contracts and becomes still is *yīn* in nature. Material forms and phenomena in time and space arise as the result of active, lighter *ch'ì* of Heaven precipitating into heavier dense, passive *ch'ì* of matter. The *ch'ì* of Heaven furnishes the energy and motion within all phenomena, while the *ch'ì* of earth provides visible and tangible form. In due course, again through the cycle of *yīn* and *yáng*, everything dissolves back into *Tào*, the great void of nothingness from which it originated.

Huái Nán Tzu, a second-century BCE Taoist classic, purporting to be the annals of Prince Huái Nán, describes the emergence of *yīn yáng* at the beginning of creation:

> Before Heaven and Earth had taken form, all was vague and amorphous. Therefore, it was called the Great Beginning. The Great Beginning produced emptiness, and emptiness produced the universe. The

> universe produced material force *(ch'ì)* which had limits. That which was clear and light drifted up to become Heaven, while that which was heavy and turbid solidified to become Earth. It was very easy for the pure, fine material to come together, but extremely difficult for the heavy, turbid material to solidify. Therefore, Heaven was completed first, and Earth assumed shape after. The combined essences of Heaven and Earth became the *yīn* and *yáng;* the concentrated essences of the *yīn* and *yáng* became the four seasons; and the scattered essences of the four seasons became the myriad creatures of the world.
>
> After a long time, the hot force of the accumulated *yáng* produced fire, and the essence of the fire force became the sun; the cold force of the accumulated *yīn* became water, and the essence of the water force became the moon. The essence of the excess force of the sun and moon became the stars and planets. Heaven received the sun, moon and stars, while Earth received water and soil.
>
> *Huái Nán Tzu 3:1a, SCT pp.192–93*

Té, the active power of *Tào,* is thus manifested through the interaction of *ch'ì* and *yīn yáng*. And these further interact through the triune relationship of Heaven *(T'iēn),* Earth *(Tì)* and man *(jén),* as well as the five agents or elements *(wǔ hsíng)* to fashion the myriad forms of matter, the ten thousand things *(wàn wù).* Lăo Tzu describes this very simply. He says that the One (the Great Beginning, which came from *Tào*), created two – *yīn yáng;* and two created three – Heaven, Earth and man; and these three created the myriad objects of Heaven, Earth and man – the ten thousand things *(wàn wù):*

> *Tào* generates one;
> One generates two;
> Two generates three;
> Three generates the ten thousand things *(wàn wù).*
> All things are backed by shade *(i.e. yīn),*
>   and faced by light *(i.e. yáng),*
>   and harmonized by the immaterial breath *(ch'ì).*
>
> *Lăo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 42*

Chuāng Tzu, a fourth-century BCE follower of Lăo Tzu who expounded on Lăo Tzu's teachings through the use of stories and parables, describes an inner vision of the sage Lăo Tzu, which illustrates how *yīn* and *yáng* form the teeming world of the creation. In this story, the scholar Confucius visits Lăo Tzu to find him sitting outside drying his recently washed hair in the sun. Lăo Tzu is sitting as still as a rock, looking absolutely lifeless. After some time, Lăo Tzu stirs, and Confucius says:

> "A little while ago, this body, these limbs of yours, seemed stark and lifeless as a withered tree. It was as though you had severed yourself from men and things, and existed in utter isolation."
>
> "Yes," said Lăo Tzu, "I had voyaged to the World's Beginning."
>
> "Tell me what that means," said Confucius.
>
> "The mind is darkened by what it learns there, and cannot understand; the lips are folded, and cannot speak. But I will try to embody for you some semblance of what I saw. I saw *Yīn,* the Female Energy, in its motionless grandeur; I saw *Yáng,* the Male Energy, rampant in its fiery vigour. The motionless grandeur came up out of the Earth; the fiery vigour burst out from Heaven. The two penetrated one another, were inextricably blended, and from their union the things of the world were born."
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 21, TWT p.16*

In human life, the interplay of *yīn* and *yáng,* of duality, makes one thing relative to another. There is pleasure and pain, hot and cold, light and dark, superior and inferior, right and wrong. Moreover, what is right to one is wrong to another. What is liked by one is disliked by another. Only in the oneness of *Tào* is all duality and difference transcended. Chuāng Tzu highlights this by relating a discussion between the sage Wáng Nì and his disciple, Nièh Ch'uèh. The disciple asks, "Do you know what all things agree in calling right?" Wáng Nì replies:

> Men claim that Máo Ch'iàng and Lady Lĭ (legendary women of great beauty) were beautiful, but if fish saw them they would dive to the bottom of the stream, if birds saw them they would fly away, and if deer saw them they would break into a run. Of these four, which knows how to fix the standard of beauty for the world? The way I see it, the rules of benevolence and righteousness and the paths of right and wrong are all hopelessly snarled and jumbled. How could I know anything about such discriminations?
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 2, CTW p.46*

See also: **ch'ì**, **ì**, **Tào** (2.2), **té**, **wŭ hsíng**.

yüén ch'ì (yuán qì) (C) *Lit.* primordial *(yüén)* breath *(ch'ì);* original breath. It is said that *yüén ch'ì* was thought to be originally concentrated in a great formless mist or chaos within which *yīn* and *yáng* were nearly indistinguishable, but eventually emanated to become separate forces. This distinction of *yīn* and *yáng* gradually brought about the dualistic nature of the universe, which ultimately gave rise to the multiplicity of forms in the physical creation.

See also: **ch'ì**, **wàn wù**.

yug(a) (S/H/Pu), **jug** (Pu) *Lit.* age; the four ages *(chāryuga)* of traditional Hindu cosmology – *kṛitayuga* or *satyuga, tretāyuga, dvāparayuga* and *kaliyuga* – which came into being sometime between the writing of the *Ṛig Veda* (where there is no mention of it) and that of the *Mahābhārata* (where the *yugas* are expounded at length by the learned and semidivine monkey-like being, Hanumān); described as a sequence of ages through which the physical universe passes, characterized by progressively declining morality and spirituality *(dharma)*. According to the *Mahābhārata* and the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, which together contain the most detailed accounts of the *yugas,* one cycle of the four *yugas* (a *mahāyuga*) spans a period of 4.32 million years, after which the world is destroyed by fire, or fire and flood, in an event called a *laya* (dissolution), and the cycle restarts. The universe is presently going through a *kaliyuga.*

This cycling of the four *yugas* is described as continuing for one thousand cycles, a period of 4.32 billion years. This is known as a *kalpa* or a day of *Brahmā,* followed by *pralaya* (dissolution) of the creation *(brahmāṇḍa)*. After a similar period of quiescence (a night of *Brahmā*), the creation of the three worlds again takes place and the same cycling of the *yugas* continues as before. The completion of one day and one night of *Brahmā* therefore makes a total of 8.64 billion years. Some authorities say that a *kalpa* is a day and a night of *Brahmā.*

The four *yugas* are given the names of the four faces of an Indian dice, as used in various Indian games, traditional Indian dice being rectangular, with the scoring faces on the four oblong sides:

Kṛita	(accomplished, done, good)	four spots	the winning throw
Tretā	(triad, from *traya,* three)	three spots	the second best throw
Dvāpara	(from *dvā,* two)	two spots	the third best throw
Kali	(strife, discord)	one spot	the losing throw

The meaning of *kṛita* (accomplished, done, good) may explain the alternative name for this *yuga,* the *satyayuga.* The original meaning of *kali* was the name of the losing side of a dice, from which its meaning as strife or discord probably came into being. The names of the faces of an Indian dice are ancient, as indicated by a saying attributed to the Buddha (*c.*560–480 BCE):

> Easily seen are the faults of others:
>   hard, indeed, to see one's own.
> A person winnows others' faults like chaff,
>   but hides his own,
>   as a cheat hides a losing throw *(kali).*
>
> *Dhammapada 18:18*

The term *kali* should not be confused with *Kālī* (the goddess of destruction) or *Kāl* (the god of death). The association between *kali* and *Kālī* or *Kāl* is only phonetic, although this may have been in the minds of writers when speaking of *kaliyuga.*

The fact that these terms are derived from dice throwing explains why *tretā,* meaning triad or triplet, is the second *yuga,* and why *dvāpara,* from *dvā* (two), is the third *yuga.* The naming of the *yugas* according to the names of the faces on Indian dice has led to the more common description of their successively declining spirituality as times when *dharma* (righteousness, religion, spirituality) stood on four legs *(kṛitayuga),* on three legs *(tretāyuga),* on two legs *(dvāparayuga),* and one leg *(kaliyuga).*

In the *Vishṇu Purāṇa,* the duration of these ages is given in 'years of the gods' or 'divine years'. Since each day of the gods equals one human year, and 360 is taken as the number of days in the year, the number of earthly years in each age is the number of divine years multiplied by 360. Each *yuga* includes two twilight periods at the beginning and the end, known respectively as the *sandhyā* (twilight) and the *sandhyāṃsha* (portion of twilight), each being ten per cent of the central period of the *yuga:*

Yuga	*Duration (divine years)*	*Sandhyā*	*Sandhyāṃsha*	*Duration (human years)*
Kṛita or *Sat*	4000	400	400	1,728,000
Tretā	3000	300	300	1,296,000
Dvāpara	2000	200	200	864,000
Kali	1000	100	100	432,000
Total				4,320,000

The number of 'years of the gods' assigned to the *tretāyuga* and *dvāparayuga* reflects their names. The span of human life in the first three *yugas* is given in the *Padma Purāṇa* and elsewhere as 4000, 3000 and 2000 years, respectively. In *kaliyuga,* there is no fixed lifespan. "Men die while in the womb, and also they die as soon as they are born." It is also said that in the *kṛitayuga,* they are "very strong, very powerful men".[1]

The characteristics of the *yugas* are depicted in some detail by Hanumān in the *Mahābhārata.* Paraphrasing this description, *kṛitayuga* is said to be the age in which *dharma* is eternal. Duties (presumably both spiritual and secular) were not neglected, nor was there any decline in people's conduct. There was no buying or selling, and no effort was required by human beings. Their needs were met simply by their wishing so. Goodness *(sattva)* and detachment from the world prevailed. Their sense organs did not become defective with old age; there was no malice, misery, pride or deceit; no discord, hatred, cruelty, fear, suffering, jealousy or envy. The supreme *Brahman* was their transcendent resort. *Nārāyaṇa (i.e. Vishṇu),* the soul of all beings, was white. All creatures born in that age fulfilled their allotted functions. The castes, alike in their roles, fulfilled their duties, and were unceasingly devoted to one Deity, using one *mantra,* one rule and one rite. They had just one *Veda.*

Tretāyuga saw the inculcation of religious sacrifices, *dharma* decreased by a quarter, and *Vishṇu* became red. Human beings adhered to truth, and were devoted to a *dharma* dependant on ceremonies. Religious sacrifices prevailed, with sacred ceremonies and a variety of rituals. Men now acted with an object in view, seeking reward for their performance of rites and for their gifts, and they were no longer predisposed towards the practice of austerities, and to generosity out of a simple sense of duty.

In the *dvāparayuga, dharma* was reduced to a half, and *Vishṇu* became yellow. Owing to ignorance of the one *Veda,* the *Vedas* were multiplied, becoming fourfold. Some studied four *Vedas,* some three, others two, and some none at all. With the scriptures being thus divided, ceremonies were celebrated in a great variety of ways. With the decline in goodness, only a few adhered to truth; and when human beings fell away from goodness, many diseases, desires and calamities caused by destiny *(karma)* then assailed them, by which they were severely troubled. Driven to the practice of austerities and the giving of religious gifts, they became deeply disturbed *(rājasik).* Others, desiring enjoyments and heavenly bliss, offered sacrifices. Thus, human beings declined through lack of *dharma.*

In the *kaliyuga,* only one quarter of *dharma* remained. Arriving in that age of darkness, *Vishṇu* became black. Practices enjoined by the *Vedas,* spiritual practices and sacrificial rites ceased. Calamities, diseases, fatigue, imperfections such as anger and so on, troubles, anxiety, hunger and fear prevailed.

As the *yugas* pass, spirituality declines; as a result, people also go into decline. As they degenerate, so do their motivations. The *karma* generated by this decline of the *yugas* frustrates human aims. Such is *kaliyuga,* the age in which the world now finds itself.[2]

Human origins and the origins of the universe are characteristic themes of practically all mythologies. Many of these are often regarded as fanciful, some as symbolic, while others may contain elements of reality. In the case of the *yugas,* it is more or less impossible for normal human beings to know how much truth, if any, there is in the idea. Mystics who could have given an answer to the question have been largely silent, and their references to the *yugas* may simply be in the context of the beliefs of those among whom they have lived. However, the image of a cyclic ebb and flow of spirituality in the physical universe has some appealing aspects, and is worth considering in a modern context.

Kṛita or *satyuga* is described as a time predominated by truth, when people are truthful in all their affairs. Truthfulness of this nature implies far more than that of a high morality. It involves an intrinsic awareness of God's presence and will in all things, much as the inhabitants of the heavenly realms experience, where the veil between the soul and God, as the supreme Truth or Reality, is far less than it is in the world as it is presently constituted.

If this is indeed the case, then a *satyuga* would be a time when consciousness of the immanence of the divine Spirit or Life Force would be at its greatest. The physical universe and all its beings would be in a state of considerable subtlety, compared to the conditions in which they presently exist. The atmosphere or vibration would be one of far higher spirituality than present times. It would be like the most spiritually uplifting place or environment ever experienced, multiplied a millionfold.

According to the *Padma Purāṇa,* a *satyuga* comes about after the destruction of the world at the end of the previous *kaliyuga.* The *Padma Purāṇa* speaks of fire and flood, though this may be intended in a general sense to mean a period of complete physical chaos and spiritual degeneration. Like all cycles, whether of the seasons, of lifespans or anything else, there is a birth or coming into being, growth, stasis, decline and death. The end of *kaliyuga* is the 'death' of the cycle of the four *yugas,* following which there is the new 'birth' of a *satyuga.*

This death and rebirth of the cycle of the *yugas,* is due, perhaps, to the resolution of *karma* accumulated from the births of the previous cycle. Just as night resolves the impressions of the previous day so that much drops away from the conscious mind; and just as death permits the impressions of the previous lifetime to be buried deeper within the mind; so too, perhaps, does the advent of a *satyuga* permit a seemingly fresh start for a soul, with much of the previous *karma* relegated to the deeply buried level of *sañchit* or stored *karma.*

If this is the case, it means that the physical universe and its creatures are subject to an amazing periodicity, the incredible nature of which is difficult to comprehend. A *satyuga* would be a cosmic springtime and spring-cleaning in which the excesses of the preceding *kaliyuga* are restored and redressed. It would be a springtime on a grand and cosmic scale, when the power of the Life Force, of God, pours through into the physical plane. Existence would then be of a vastly increased vitality and subtlety, with human beings more deeply conscious of the divine presence and will in all things. Man would take a more conscious role in the working out of the divine will in His creation, putting on one side his sense of self and individuality.

Although the extraordinary longevity attributed to human beings during the first three *yugas* may simply stem from the traditional licence of exaggeration accorded to mythology, it could also be a symbolic or metaphorical way of indicating man's varying spiritual estate during the different *yugas.*

A highly spiritualized state could make an extended lifespan possible, as well as tolerable. Certainly, with a working lifetime of several thousand years, the activities which occupy a human being during a *satyuga* would need to be significantly different from those which absorb his attention during a *kaliyuga.*

A *satyuga* is followed by *tretāyuga,* when the powerful surge of the life force underlying the *satyuga* begins to decline. *Tretāyuga* is said to be characterized by the introduction of external religious observances. Perhaps this is intended metaphorically, but in any case, it must be assumed that any religious practices in such times would be far finer, subtler and more truly devotional than their present-day equivalents. They would be designed to bring the souls into greater attunement with the divine will, thus providing true inner, spiritual nourishment.

The decline in the spiritual atmosphere continues into the third period, the *dvāparayuga,* when it is said that man begins to seek God through external worship. Lastly comes *kaliyuga,* the shortest of the four *yugas,* lasting only one tenth of the total span of all four *yugas.* This is the darkest and most miserable age. The immanent presence of God is so deeply veiled that most souls are unaware of His existence and omnipresence, as well as the depth and intensity of their own suffering.

This is an age which can be described from direct experience. During this age, more than any other, man is so hemmed in and crystallized by his individual mind into a mostly subconscious condition that he hardly knows he is alive. He is largely unaware that he is a soul, a conscious drop of the divine ocean of Consciousness. He knows practically nothing of his mind, let alone that it is responsible for all his suffering. Indeed, he is hardly aware of the degree of his suffering, for the possibility or experience of divine bliss as a constant and daily companion has become deeply buried and lost.

His experience of being is so tightly constrained that he considers the 'world' perceived by his five physical senses as the be-all and end-all of everything. He even considers his mind and consciousness to be the derivatives of material substance rather than the reverse. His sense of being is totally focused upon his physical life, and a strong sense of egocentric rather than divine identity stalks his days. He even begins to eat his fellow creatures, quite unaware of the suffering he causes. When his ego, anger, greed, lust or attachment are aroused too much, he does not hesitate to kill his fellow humans.

Kaliyuga is thus characterized by war, dissension, intolerance and so on, all these being crystallized habits of the mind. Man himself remains largely unaware of what motivates him, and makes him do what he does, and feel the way he does.

Many human civilizations which have come and gone over the last 6000 years or so can be seen more as a descent into materialization than as any sort of progress. This is in keeping with man's appreciation of himself in a *kaliyuga* when he measures his achievements not by the quality of his inner spirituality, his humanity, his self-control, his true inward happiness and his peacefulness, but by his ability to create external witnesses to his existence: his buildings, his apparent control over nature and his fellow creatures, and by the creation of organizational structures in which he is in fact imprisoned.

If the more ancient man who is known to archaeologists lived freely in nature, in easily constructed thatched cottages of mud and other simple materials, also making use of caves, then that does not make him less full of human qualities. It means that, in general, he was probably more spiritual and less materially minded. Similarly, the ability to externalize words and thoughts in reading and writing, though commonly heralded as a great advance, actually represents a movement away from man's inner centre and a crystallization into the material world. Literacy and civilization go hand in hand, since it is essential for commerce, in contracts and in communications. But spirituality is a quality of being that does not require externalizations of any kind, and which can be deeply constrained by them.

Thinking along similar lines, 'Ināyat Khān observes:

> Man has considered civilization to be that which the ancient Hindus termed *kaliyug,* or the iron age.... At the present time, a man's word is no longer his bond; a signed contract is needed. A superficial politeness has taken the place of love, and artificiality has taken the place of truth. Machinery has usurped the place of personal bravery. Religion and morality have been superseded by trade unions, and material investigation has taken the place of life's realization.
>
> Man can no longer distinguish the difference between a fleeting joy and an everlasting peace. The objective world is so concrete before his eyes that he cannot see beyond it. He wants to realize the material results of his efforts, even at the cost of his life, and the call of heaven itself fails to attract him to the Infinite.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK8 pp.214–15*

The stress and disharmony of a *kaliyuga* wear out a physical body in less than a hundred years, and man's strength seems to lie mostly in his muscles, even though it is really the mind behind the muscles which is the source of strength. According to traditional descriptions, the end of a *kaliyuga* is marked by confusion, an almost complete absence of spiritual standards of living, and the dominance of heartless and tyrannical leaders who have no understanding of the true nature of life, and whose motivations are entirely self-oriented and material in character. The *Padma Purāṇa* observes:

> In *kaliyuga,* a being has almost attained demonhood.
>
> *Padma Purāṇa 6:193.7, PP9 p.2971*

Fortunately, this description does not yet characterize humanity as a whole, and – presuming some truth to the myth – how far advanced the present *kaliyuga* is is a matter of speculation. Some calculate that it is near its end, others that it is only a few thousand years old. Even so, as a *kaliyuga* progresses, the situation reaches a point where life is almost untenable. Then the world is destroyed, and a new *satyuga* follows, just as the sweetness and vitality of spring follow the cold grasp of winter.

The four *yugas* bear considerable resemblance to the descriptions given of the four ages in Greek and Roman mythology – the golden, silver, bronze and iron ages. No one knows the origins of Indian and Greek mythology, but there are some significant similarities between them. Greek, Latin, Sanskrit and the ancient Persian language are members of the same language group, and where languages are shared, then there is also likely to be a sharing of religion and mythology. So perhaps the origin of the idea was somewhere in the ancient Middle East. But whatever the source, if there is any truth to the idea of the *yugas*, the information must have come, somewhere along the way, from mystical perception.

During the past hundred years or so, science has learnt many things about the past history of the planet. It is pertinent to ask, therefore, whether there is any geological evidence – or otherwise – for the passage of the *yugas*. Are there, for example, any large-scale cycles in nature which might correlate to the passage of the *yugas?* To some extent, the answer is in the affirmative. A study of the fossil record indicates that massive extinctions among the species take place on a cyclic basis every several million years. This is followed by a correspondingly large influx of new variations on the previous themes. Scientists have called this pattern of extinction and regeneration the theory of punctuated equilibria. Moreover, the cycles more or less correspond to the purported ebb and flow of the *yugas*, although there is a difference in the time scales. The ebb and flow in the fossil record is of the order of 8 to 10 million years – twice that ascribed to the cycle of the *yugas* in the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*.

This discrepancy can be accounted for in a number of ways. Maybe the writer of the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* was inaccurate in his information; or perhaps there is something that makes the scientific calculations inaccurate – there could be a corresponding ebb and flow in the so-called universal constants by which palaeontological time is measured, for example; or maybe the idea of the *yugas* is altogether fanciful.

Presuming – for the sake of discussion – that there is some reality underlying the mythology of the *yugas*, it would seem reasonable that radically new species would come into being more during a *satyuga* than at any other time. Biological processes would then be quickened, like an old man receiving the elixir of life, as the dense crystallization of mind and substance characteristic of a *kaliyuga* is relaxed, and a finer degree of subtlety in physical matter and associated energies comes into play.

The subtlety and regenerative power of a *satyuga* would thus be one of the missing factors in the conventional understanding of evolution and the interpretation of the fossil record. Another feature missing from the conventional viewpoint is that all bodies – human or otherwise – are expressions of the mind. Bodies are really parts or aspects of the mind. This is an aspect of the functioning of the law of *karma.*

Therefore, the attempt to understand the history of fossilized creatures is much impeded if there is no comprehension of the way in which mind and *karma* lie behind the formation of bodily forms. To get a body like some particular species of dinosaur, a soul must have a mind like that dinosaur. Similarly, with all other bodily forms. This needs to be taken into account in any attempt to understand the complete picture.

The flooding of the physical universe with the Life Force at the time of a *satyuga* would be the regenerative power which stimulates the emergence of new species or bodily forms from their predecessors. Precisely which forms come into existence would be in accordance with the karmic requirements of the souls at that time, brought about by biological and cosmic processes which are presently hidden from view or are not understood. In the mystic view of things, genetic changes, for example, cannot be a matter of *chance* selection, since mysticism sees no chance in nature. Genetic processes are as much subject to the governance of the mind as any other part of creation in the worlds of the mind. They will therefore be governed by the requirements of *karma* and by the overall integration, administration and balance of nature.

The cycle of the four *yugas* represents a slow decline in the Life Force, as the greater mind again closes in and crystallizes subtlety into gross forms. In the fossil record, really new forms (though based upon previous patterns) appear only at the start of the cycle. After that, new variations become increasingly less both in number and in character as the cycle progresses, and (generally speaking) life forms begin to die out with increasing rapidity, especially as the end of the cycle approaches. According to the fossil record, the degree of extinction varies from cycle to cycle, sometimes being as much as ninety-five per cent of all old forms. At the present time, the planet is involved in an extinction of species on a massive scale. This has been going on for the last several hundred thousand years, but has accelerated incredibly in the last hundred years.

The vast time spans, amounting to millions of years, through which the planet has passed have only comparatively recently been accepted in Western thought, previously constrained by a literal belief in the two separate accounts of creation given in *Genesis*. Fundamentalist Christian belief dates the creation to around 4000 BCE, though the calculation is of comparatively recent origin.

The fifteenth-century Bishop Ussher of Ireland, on the basis of events related in the Old Testament, made his own calculations and concluded that the world was created at 9:00 am on Friday the 23rd of October, 4004 BCE (presumably, Dublin time!). The second-century Clement of Alexandria, in a chapter of his *Miscellanies* devoted to the dating of the Jewish prophets, the ancient Greeks and other personalities of antiquity, puts forward dates that add up to a span of 6155 years from Adam to the death of the tyrannical Roman emperor, Commodus (161–192 CE), son of Emperor Marcus Aurelius,[3] dating Adam to 5963 BCE. Generally speaking, however, mystics say very little concerning the planet's past history because it only panders to one's sense of curiosity, and does not help an individual's spiritual progress.

Whatever the reality may be regarding the *yugas,* it is all taking place by divine design. The Supreme Being knows exactly what He is doing. Hence, the apparent suffering of a *kaliyuga* – for mystics say that, in reality, it is all an illusion – has a divine purpose. Saints have said that during the preceding three *yugas,* human beings have very little interest in returning to God, because they are mostly contented. But during a *kaliyuga,* the degree of suffering – because the Lord has almost completely hidden Himself behind the veil of the mind – becomes intense. As a consequence, when Saviours incarnate, they find that souls are more willing to accept their guidance and return to God.

Mystics say that this is, in fact, the spiritual purpose of human life, for it is only through the human form that the soul can find the path that leads back to God. This, presumably, must also be the purpose of a *kaliyuga,* for without this suffering the souls would remain happy in the Lord's creation and in their limited perception of His presence. Even amid the sufferings and vicissitudes of physical existence, most souls accept their lot and cling tenaciously to physical life. However, when the pain of separation becomes too much, then their impetus and desire to go back to Him are sharpened. It is the darkness which makes a soul appreciate the light.

Indian Saints do seem to have generally acknowledged the reality of the cycle of *yugas,* speaking of them within the context of traditional Hindu cosmology. Ravidās writes:

> In *satjug* was truth *(sat),*
>   in *tretā,* sacrificial feast *(yagya),*
>   and in *dvāpar,* the performance of good worship *(pūjā).*
> In the three ages *(jug),* men held fast to these three:
>   in *kalijug,* the Name *(Nām)* is the only prop.
>
> *Ravidās, Ādi Granth 346, MMS*

Likewise, Tulsīdās says:

> Contemplation was the practice in the first age,
> sacrifice *(makh bidhi)* in the second,
> and idol worship *(pūjā)* in *dvāpara.*
> *Kaliyuga* is nothing but the root of all dirt and impurity.
> There, the minds of men wallow like fish in an ocean of sin.
> *Kāl* is terrible, and the Name *(Nām)* is the wish-fulfilling tree.
> Remembrance *(sumiran)* of the Name *(Nām)*
> cuts the web of illusion and the ties of the world.
> In *kaliyuga,* it is only the Name of God *(Rām Nām)*
> that yields the desired fruit.
>
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 1:26.2–3; cf. TRCM pp.23–24*

Even *kaliyuga,* therefore, has a positive aspect. Indeed, it is said that, during *kaliyuga,* mystics of the highest order come in comparatively large numbers and are extremely merciful. The souls, when awakened by a perfect Master, are also sincerely interested in returning to God rather than remaining in any part of His creation – physical or otherwise. With only a little devotion on the part of their disciples, the Masters open spiritual treasures to them. What in other *yugas* is difficult to achieve even by centuries of hard practice, may through devotion to a *Guru* and to the mystic Sound, be attained during *kaliyuga* in a comparatively short time. Mahārāj Sāwan Singh writes:

> *Kaliyuga* has still a long time to last. Man is feeble. No one can properly do right actions. *Dharma,* charity, pilgrimages and true austerities cannot be practised. An adverse wind is blowing. He who practises the Name gets a bad name. Those who indulge in an outward show of piety or practise hypocrisy are considered to be respectable....
>
> In this age, all the world is indulging in selfishness owing to the restlessness of the mind; no one can properly devote himself to repetition of sacred names *(jap),* austerities *(tap),* or fasts or worships, and people are spoiling their chances of happiness in their future life by forgetting the Name.... Unless one gets the correct method from the Master and develops true love and devotion, all his repetition, austerities, self-control, fasts and holy baths are in vain....
>
> In *kaliyuga,* the outer repetition of *mantras* and the practice of austerities do not lead to salvation. The repetition of *mantras,* austerities, self-control, fasts, worship and so forth do not eradicate the feeling of egotism. The soul is entangled in the cleverness of the mind and the jungle of *māyā.* It does not find the way of escape from these snares.... In *kaliyuga,* no action or ritual except for the practice of *Nām* leads to salvation.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 3, PM3 pp.11–13*

The path to God has always been through God's creative Power alone, but in *kaliyuga* no other forms of worship can even lead to purity of mind, for in a world where ego rules, some degree of egotism always develops in the practitioners. And egotism is the primary cause of separation from God, and hence of all suffering. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

> In *kaliyuga,* all *karmas* (here, meaning modes of worship), with the exception of *Nām* (the Name) and *Satguru bhakti* (devotion to the Master), are forbidden, and if anyone violates this injunction, that is, indulges in forms of worship enjoined in past ages, he will only develop egotism and become impure instead of pure.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 2:221; cf. SB p.123*

Other Indian mystics have spoken in a similar manner:

> The one Lord's Name emancipates in the four ages *(jug):*
> it is through the *Guru*'s teaching (*Shabd,* Word)
> that one deals in the Name *(Nām).*
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1055, MMS*

See also: **ages of classical Greece and Rome**, **chaurāsī** (6.3), **pralaya**.

1. *Padma Purāṇa* 3:7.1–11, *PP4* p.1366.
2. *Mahābhārata, Vānaparvan* 11234*ff.; cf.* in *OST1* pp.143–46.
3. Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* I:21.

ẓimẓum (He) *Lit.* contraction, withdrawal; a term introduced by the sixteenth-century Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed. Luria described a creative process in which God first withdrew His essence into Himself. He thus created a vacuum or empty 'space *(tehiru)*' in which the creation could take place. According to Luria, prior to *ẓimẓum,* the spiritual qualities or powers of God – which the Kabbalists called the *sefirot* (emanations) – existed undifferentiated, beyond duality, within the *Ayn-Sof* (the Infinite).

Through *ẓimẓum,* the *Ayn-Sof* contracted within Himself, so that what was not Him could come into existence. In this process of self-limitation, God eliminated from Himself even the roots of the lower, downward forces – those containing the potential for matter, and hence evil.

Specifically, through *ẓimẓum, Ayn-Sof* separated the roots of the *sefirah* of *Din* (Judgment) from the *sefirah* of *Ḥesed* (Mercy), eliminating Judgment from within Himself. Put in another way, the process of *ẓimẓum* describes the separation of the supreme spiritual essence of God from the creation, prior to the creation taking place.

Luria's identification of Judgment as the primary quality or aspect to be separated from the *Ayn-Sof* in the process of the creation is significant. Mystics have universally expressed the same thought: that above the level of the creation, only mercy and grace exist, and all is in harmony within the divine Source. Only in the creation do judgment or justice (cause and effect) come into play.

According to Luria, in addition to the roots of Judgment being confined to the vacuum created through *ẓimẓum,* a residual trace *(reshimu)* of the divine Light of *Ayn-Sof* also remained in the empty space. This ray of light serves to connect the vacuum with the *Ayn-Sof.* It is the divine current or will, the divine energy that gives life to the entire creation, manifesting as the *sefirah* of *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), the Word. It gives shape and limits the emanation of the *sefirot.*

Luria and other Kabbalists attempted through their elaborate cosmogonies to understand and describe the mysteries of life: the seeming injustice and imperfection of the creation, the perception that love has been replaced by justice, the sense of exile from their spiritual Source felt by souls in this world. From a superficial human perspective, it could appear that God does not reveal much of Himself in the creation. Some believe that He is altogether transcendent, and has indeed withdrawn Himself. But actually, the sense that God has deserted the creation arises because the souls have become so caught up in material and egoistic preoccupations. In such a state, souls focus on the diversity and the duality of the creation, rather than the Creator, the One. But in whatever way it is described, the experience of separation remains the same.

According to Luria, the process of *ẓimẓum* is only the beginning of the descent of the divine light from the Godhead into the creation. The primary emanation of light from the *Ayn-Sof* creates the form of *Adam Kadmon* (Primordial Man) – a macrocosm of the universe – from whom or through whom the divine light emanates into the creation. Ultimately, that light becomes trapped in the *kelipot* (husks) of grosser light (or matter), through the cosmic tragedy of *shevirat ha-kelim* (breaking of the vessels). Thus, the initial withdrawal, or contraction of the Godhead, is replicated at several stages, as the divine light falls deeper and deeper into its separation and imprisonment in the creation.

The divine forces or *sefirot* can be liberated only through *tikkun* (restoration) of the sparks to their source in the *Ayn-Sof.* Most of Luria's teachings involved various spiritual practices designed to hasten this process of *tikkun.* These were called *yiḥudim* (unifications), *kavvanot* (concentrations) and *tikkunim* (restorations).

See also: **kelipot, niẓoẓot, parẓufim, shevirat ha-kelim, tehiru.**